Transforming Whiteness: Exploring Transformation at Stellenbosch University

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

As a historically Afrikaans university linked to the lingering legacies of Apartheid-era affiliation, Stellenbosch University (SU) faces harsh transformative realities. It has sought to tackle these realities through various policies and initiatives aimed at establishing (amongst others) diverse enrolment and racial inclusivity. Nevertheless, SU has consistently found itself embroiled in campus controversies over the past few years. More often than not, these controversies are 'race' related. As such, this thesis, by means of a theoretical case study, seeks to contextualise transformation at SU and questions its (in)efficacy thus far. The focus on transformation is divided into two levels: "institutional" and "relational". The analysis of transformation in relation to these two levels is grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS), to try and illuminate novel areas of interest leading to nuanced, prospective, discussion. Using CRT, some of SU's institutional attempts to transform are examined. A focus is placed on the Language Policy, given its central role in aiming to contribute to greater campus diversity. Amongst other findings, the lack of historical context contained within the various policy documents, in terms of highlighting Afrikaans' stigmatic past, undermines the intent and efficacy of SU's institutional transformation going forward. The Listen Live and Learn housing initiative is used as a starting point for a discussion on relational transformation. CWS is used as a lens to try and make sense of some of the individualised transformative shortcomings of the initiative. Whiteness, with a specific focus on Afrikaner whiteness, is established as a complex campus force that contains defensive elements in relation to transformation. These elements range from blatant *resistance*, to more latent elements such as *fragility*, *guilt* and *shame*. Often, these latent strategies come in discursive forms and are thus particularly unproductive in relation to transformation, as they serve to engender a lack of active and meaningful engagement. Nevertheless, elements of prospective transformative potential within whiteness are identified in relation to white *fatigue*. Finally, it is submitted that cautionary and effective engagement with whiteness offers a complimentary avenue on the road to achieving holistic transformation, in aiming to facilitate normative diversity on all fronts.

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Abbreviations:

BCI – Black, Coloured and Indian

CRT – Critical Race Theory

CWS – Critical Whiteness Studies

FVZS – Frederick van Zyl Slabbert Institute

HAU – Historically Afrikaans University

LLL – Listen, Live & Learn Initiative

SARB – South African Reconciliation Barometer Survey

SES – Socio-economic status

SU – Stellenbosch University

TRC – Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UCT – University of Cape Town

VC – Vice–Chancellor

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

South Africa has experienced a tumultuous transition from Apartheid autocracy to democracy. Eyes have shifted away from the various post-1994 transitional justice mechanisms[1], to the ever-pressing and ever-enduring realities of transformative justice[2]. South Africa's nascent democracy has been tasked with transforming a plethora of societal sectors ranging from the more obvious macro-undertakings (such as business, land and education) to the micro and more intimate engagements (such as interpersonal interaction). More than two decades on, South Africa remains socially stratified and deeply divided on multiple fronts. As Dion Foster puts it, "[t]he country remains divided by race, class and economics. Poverty, inequality and racial enmity remain looming challenges to human flourishing and social transformation"[3]. This manifests itself in many ways; most notably in terms of (in)accessibility to various human systems and structures. The education sector provides a clear example of this, and for the purpose of this paper, tertiary level education in particular. Over the past few years this issue has been promulgated to screens across the world, as students from across the country have been busy engaging in protest action relating to (but not limited to) access and the decolonisation of campuses. Stellenbosch University (SU) is a tertiary level institution at the centre of this nexus – struggling to keep up with the demands being made as a result of various transformative injustices highlighted locally and indeed nationally. This 'struggle' provides the basis for this thesis' focus.

1.1.1. Problem Statement

As a Historically Afrikaans University (HAU) linked to the lingering legacies of Apartheid-era affiliation, SU faces harsh transformative realities. It has sought to

[1] "These may include not only criminal prosecutions, truth telling, institutional reform and reparations as core interventions, but also commemorative practices and memory work, educational reform, reconciliation initiatives and more." Per Paul Gready and Simon Robins in Paul Gready and Simon Robins, "From Transitional to Transformative Justice: A New Agenda for Practice", *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 8, (2014): 344.

[2] Defined in section 2.2.

[3] Dion Forster, "A public theological approach to the (im)possibility of forgiveness in Mathew 18:15-35: Reading the text through the lens of integral theory," *In die Skrifig*, 51, 3 (2017): 1. https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v51i3.2108.

tackle these realities through various policies and initiatives aimed at establishing (amongst others) diverse enrolment and racial inclusivity. Nevertheless, SU has consistently found itself embroiled in campus controversies over the past few years. More often than not, these controversies are 'race' related. As such, this thesis seeks to contextualise transformation at SU and questions its efficacy thus far. This analysis will be grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) to try and illuminate novel areas of interest leading to nuanced, prospective, discussion.

Indeed, some of the aforementioned tensions are felt elsewhere, with campuses all around the country currently providing hotbeds for engagement (occasionally culminating in direct conflict) on transformative injustices. UCT has been the site several of momentous incidents, such as the removal of the infamous Cecil John Rhodes statue on Upper Campus following the mobilisation of the #RhodesMustFall movement. The subsequent #FeesMustFall movement garnered a nationwide following in 2015, culminating in mass student gatherings and protests throughout the country. Since 2015, UCT and the University of Witwatersrand have been the most prominent sites for clashes between protestors (comprising not only of students, but also of staff members, workers and members of the general public) and law enforcement agencies. The latter ranged from heavily militarised SAPS to private security firms such as G4S. At UCT, the movement shifted from campus to the doorsteps of parliament. The #FeesMustFall movement, amongst other demands, has called for a zero per cent increase on University fees, alongside the decolonisation[4] of campuses and curricula. Here we see two transformation imperatives being brought to the fore regarding fees (access) and decolonisation (transformation of institutional culture and curricula). Each year, the movement continues, as demands remain (from the perspective of the movement) unanswered. From the perspective of University management(s), several bureaucratic balls are being juggled. Amidst

[4] This is a pertinent aspect of broader transformation efforts particularly in relation to higher education, but falls outside the scope of this mini-thesis. See Christoffel H. Thesnaar, "Decolonisation and renewed racism: A challenge and opportunity for reconciliation?', *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies*, 73, 3, (2017): 3. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.3838.

"chronic governmental underfunding"[5] SU, for example, finds itself financially strained, having to redirect R15.2million from its discretionary fund to make up the deficit on its main budget in 2016. The recent announcement by the former president Jacob Zuma promising free higher education for "poor and working class students"[6], has added confusion and placed further financial strain on tertiary level institutions around the country. The surprise announcement effectively overruled the findings of the Heher Commission into the Feasibility of Fee-Free Higher Education, which found that "…there is insufficient financial capacity in the state to provide totally free higher education and training to all who are unable to finance their own education, let alone to all students, whether in need or not"[7]. With 2018 University registration looming (at the time of writing), it remains to be seen how this development will play out. Though many of the issues mentioned above have impacted – and will continue to impact – on the tertiary sector as a whole, SU provides a uniquely complex site of enquiry. The transformative realities faced by SU are unlike most historically white institutions, given many of its historical affiliations with Apartheid. Various legacies relating to whiteness and racially segregationist policies are still contemporaneously felt, as showcased by transformative tensions and contemporary campus controversies.

1.2. Motivation for Focus on Stellenbosch University

SU has been a key protagonist within national discourses on transformation. As a historically Afrikaans university (HAU) with strong historical ties to Afrikaner nationalism[8], it has been confronted with the need to transform its institutional identity. However, whiteness still retains a strong structural grip on SU. At the

[5] *Annual Integrated Report 2016*, Stellenbosch University, accessed January 13, 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Documents/2016/SU%20Annual%20Report%202016_for%20web.pdf.

[6] Defined as students "currently enrolled TVET Colleges or university students from South African households with a combined annual income of up to R350 000". See Ahmed Areff and Derrick Spies, "BREAKING: Zuma announces free higher education for poor and working class students", *News24*, 16 December, 2017. https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/zuma-announces-free-higher-education-for-poor-and-working-class-students-20171216 (accessed January 13, 2018).

[7] *Executive Summary*, Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training, accessed January 25, 2018, at pp. 6, http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/sites/default/files/Commission%20of%20Inquiry%20into%20Higher%20Education%20Report_Executive%20Summary_0.pdf

[8] Key Apartheid era thinkers and leaders passed through the educative doors of SU. These notable alumni include DF Malan, HF Verwoerd and BJ Vorster – all apartheid-era prime ministers.

centre of this transformation lies a fiery debate over language rights and access to the University, labelled colloquially as "*die taaldebat*"[9]. The emotive and often polarizing language debate recently produced the approval (on 22 June 2016) of a new Language Policy, implemented by SU on 1 January 2017[10]. This policy holds that Afrikaans *and* English are to be the languages of teaching and learning at the university – signalling an end to the primacy afforded to Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. Indeed, as Chris Brink notes, the debate became complexly politicised:

> "The *taaldebat*, I believe, is not just about language. It is about *identity*. In the hard sense the issue is about a *reaffirmation* of identity – the group identity, namely, of the Afrikaners…In the soft sense the *taaldebat* is about a *search* for identity – an elusive group identity, namely, of all those who speak Afrikaans as their mother tongue."[11]

For others, the debate and the aforementioned Language Policy was and is seen as a positive step towards more equitable access to the university. However, despite various attempts at institutional transformation, racially disparate demographics remain.

1.2.1. Demography

Despite the implementation of numerous transformation driven directives, SU still remains, demographically, the least transformed major university in the country[12]. Both staff and student populations remain majority white[13], with the

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[9] Afrikaans for "the language debate".

[10] *Language Policy of Stellenbosch University*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 2 January, 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Documents/Language/Final%20June%20Language%20Policy%20November%202016.pdf

[11] Chris Brink, No lesser Place: *The Taaldebat at Stellenbosch*. (Stellenbosch: African SUN Press, 2006), *ii*.

[12] Elmarie Costandius et al., "Stumbling Over The First Hurdle? Exploring Notions Of Critical Citizenship," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Thinking in Higher Education*, eds. Martin Davies and Ronald Barnet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 546.

[13] In 2016 the staff demographics were: 54.5% White, 36.9% Coloured, 7.1% Black, 1.5% Indian. The Student demographic in the same year comprised of: 61.3% White, 17.6% Coloured, 18.2% Black, 2.8% Indian. See *Statistical Profile*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 2 January, 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Pages/statistical_profile.aspx.

latter demographic currently sitting at 61.3% white as of 2016[14]. In terms of home language, 40.7% of students were Afrikaans and 46.1% English speaking, while 13.2% indicated other languages to be their home language[15]. At the risk of being criticised for cherry-picking statistics, it must be noted that in terms of the white student population, despite still sitting comfortably in the majority, the total percentage decreased from 66.9% in 2012[16] – a 5.6% decrease. However, this should not be attributed to a decrease in white student enrolments, but rather to a slight increase in what the university dubs "BCI"[17] enrolments. It is submitted that this comparative categorisation – "white" vs. "BCI" – can serve to obscure transformative complexities. For instance, white student enrolments have fractionally increased, alongside the general student population growth, from 18,602 students in 2012, to 18,907 students in 2016[18]. A qualification is worth making here, in that significant demographic shifts take time. However, over two decades into the "new" South Africa, it is certainly questionable why white enrolment sits at over 60%, in a country where the white population makes up roughly 9% of the national population, and provincially roughly 16%[19]. Finally, these statistics are intended to highlight, not explain, racial enrolment inequity. To quote SU's transformation and diversity policy:

> "The promotion of diversity is an important aspect of transformation at SU, but transformation also extends far deeper and wider than the demographics of the campus community. Other objectives include a welcoming campus culture, accessibility, a multilingual academic offering, systemic sustainability, better integration of learning and living spaces as

[14] Most recent statistics available.
[15] *Statistical Profile*.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Black, Coloured and Indian. By using these classifications this thesis does not necessarily agree with, or aim to support "'racial' classifications". This is intended to provide a coherent statistical viewpoint, in line with the labels used within the documents being analysed. That being said, these classifications bear a striking resemblance to Apartheid-era "non-white" racial classifications of "native", "coloured" and "Indian". See Meredith J. Green, Christopher C. Sonn and Jabulane Masebula, "Reviewing whiteness: Theory, research and possibilities," *South African Journal of Psychology*, 37, 3 (2007): 400, https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630703700301.
[18] *Statistical Profile*.
[19] *Census 2011*, Statistics South Africa, accessed 10 December, 2017, https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P03014/P030142011.pdf.

> well as residence and private students, promoting entrepreneurial thought, academic innovation and relevance to society."[20]

As SU notes, demography does not paint the whole picture. For that, the national education sector also needs to be taken into account. A recent publication by SU's Department of Economics holds:

> "Clearly many of the patterns of university access and to a lesser extent university success that are observed are strongly influenced by school results. The weak school system has a major influence on who reaches matric, and how they perform in matric. This, and particularly the achievement of Bachelor passes, explains much of the differences in access to university by race, gender and province."[21]

Although there is certainly truth in this statement , there are other findings within the same paper that raise serious questions. For example, the throughput rates within these tertiary level institutions, which shows a disparity between the dropout rates of white and BCI students. Nationally, the "five-year dropout rate was somewhat higher amongst coloured and black students (33% and 32%) than amongst Asians and whites (23% and 17%)"[22]. Furthermore, the report detailed the fact that "black learners who achieved Bachelor passes were comparatively more likely to enrol in undergraduate certificate or diploma programmes rather than undergraduate degree programmes than their white counterparts."[23] Thus, the attempts by SU to diversify its *access* and enrolment rates to undergraduate degrees face fundamental challenges. As the report suggests, many of these challenges are out of SU's control, given that they can be

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[20] *Diversity and Transformation*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 12 January 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Pages/Diversity.aspx.
[21] Hendrik van Broekhuizen et al., "Higher Education Access and Outcomes for the 2008 National Matric Cohort," *Stellenbosch Economic Working Paper Series*, WP16, (2016): *viii*, http://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Van-Broekhuizen-et-al.pdf.
[22] In viewing these statistics, the following needs to be taken into account: "Dropout rates at university, though high, are not as high as are often reported, because many students that are considered "drop-outs" in official university statistics did not leave the university system, but changed their degree programme, switched from a degree to a diploma or certificate programme, or enrolled in a different university". Ibid.
[23] Ibid., *iii*.

predominantly traced back to the dilapidated national schooling system. Promoting or facilitating *success* within SU, also, to a lesser extent, can be influenced by the schooling system. However, in order to avoid reductionist reasoning, this should not be read as an all-encompassing explanation. SU's policies can have a direct impact on the diversity of enrolment (access) rates. For instance, in 2016 the university, by means of a poll, asked BCI students who had been offered a provisional place at the university but subsequently turned down the offer, why they chose to do so. 44% of black students listed the "use of Afrikaans in undergraduate teaching", 33% listed "negative media reports on SU", and 26% listed "inability to secure finance" as their reason[24]. In response to these statistics SU states the following:

> "The Diversity Recruitment Bursary Project, along with other financial support initiatives, should manage to attract more of these students in future. With regard to language of instruction, SU's new Language Policy, which takes effect in January 2017, is precisely aimed at improving access for all South African students by means of a multilingual offering."[25]

Only time will tell whether this holds true[26]. Furthermore, as a non-passive actor, SU plays an active role – through student support schemes, policy implementation or otherwise – in facilitating (currently racially disparate) student *success* rates. The results of said facilitation are often hard to quantify, as Van Brokehuizen and his colleagues point out: "[p]redicting university success based on observable factors is more difficult than predicting university access, which may be indicative of an articulation gap between school and university."[27]

1.2.2. Campus Controversies

Turning our eyes away from demography statistics, but remaining focussed on the student population at SU, we see similar tensions to those exposed by the

[24] *Annual Integrated Report 2016*, 54.
[25] Ibid.
[26] At the time of writing, the 2017 Annual Integrated Report has not been released.
[27] Van Broekhuizen et al., "Higher Education Access and Outcomes for the 2008 National Matric Cohort," *vii.*

institutional pressures mentioned above. Here, the "welcoming campus culture" envisioned by SU (as quoted above) is to be placed under the spotlight. SU has received relatively less coverage in terms of its role in and influence on the #FeesMustFall movement, although that is not to say that protest action has not occurred[28]. Instead, more attention has been given to campus apathy, highlighted by controversial incidents, such as the video "Luister". This video, which went viral on social media in late 2015, documented the struggles of non-native Afrikaans speaking students on campus and within the town of Stellenbosch. The video, which has amassed almost 400,000 views on YouTube[29], sparked national outcry, forcing Rector Wim De Villiers to answer to parliament regarding the overtly racist campus culture. The following year, in 2016, SU students caused outrage by painting themselves in a dark colour, resembling a similar "blackface" incident that occurred in 2014[30]. In early 2017, more viral outcry was generated following the promulgation and dissemination of "Nazi inspired" posters on SU's campus. Three students were subsequently suspended and following disciplinary proceedings, were given 100 hours of community service and a "restorative assignment" on how to constructively engage on campus and address different narratives[31]. A few months later, another 'race'-related incident in Stellenbosch went viral, following a Facebook post by Terence Makapan. The post, headlined: "RACIST ATTACK IN STELLENBOSCH", details how Mr Makapan was assaulted following the racial slur "Hotnot"[32] being heard. The post had been shared over 2,500 times, with the video contained in the post being viewed over 430,000 times as of writing[33]. Placing the validity and veracity of evidence in the claims related to the aforementioned incidents to one side; the virality of these

[28] See Jenni Evans, "Students march for free education at Stellenbosch", *News24*, 24 September, 2016. http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/students-march-for-free-education-at-stellenbosch-20160923 (accessed 10 December 2017).
[29] *Luister*, Contraband Cape Town, accessed 10 December, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF3rTBQTQk4.
[30] Tammy Petersen, "Another 'Blackface' case at Stellenbosch University", *News24*, 05 February, 2016. https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/another-blackface-case-at-stellenbosch-university-20160205 (accessed 2 January 2018).
[31] Jenna Etheridge, "3 Maties students disciplined for Nazi-inspired posters," *News24*, 14 July, 2017. https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/3-maties-students-disciplined-for-nazi-inspired-posters-20170714 (accessed 2 January 2018).
[32] A derogatory term used in relation to Coloured people.
[33] *Terence Makapan's Facebook page*, Facebook, accessed 10 January, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/terence.makapan/posts/10154753603891074?comment_id=10154758015576074.

instances serve to highlight the centrality of 'race' and racism within social (media) discourse at Stellenbosch (university) and indeed nationally. The impact of social media on campus culture will be discussed further in chapter five. For now, the following questions remain: are the aforementioned incidents isolated, or symptomatic of imbedded institutional injustices? Relationally, are these overt eruptions part of a dormant cycle, fuelled by the covert currents of campus culture? Or, in other words, does the blatant highlight the latent or does it serve to hide it?

1.3. Structure Outline

In order to provide a nuanced exploration of said leading questions, this thesis looks at two levels of transformation at SU – institutional and relational transformation. This thesis will invoke literature from the ever-growing field of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in order to illuminate the multidimensionality of institutional culture at SU. The following chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature and theoretical concepts guiding our exploration. Chapter three delves into some of the intricate facets of institutional transformation by looking at various policies implemented by SU, with a focus on the most recently enacted Language Policy. This section is intended initially as a contextual springboard to discuss some of the complex forces at play within institutional transformation at SU. Using CRT, aspects of the transformative policies will be analysed and scrutinised. This is intended to guide the discussion in Chapter four, which shifts its lens down from institutional to relational transformation, by looking at the Listen, Live and Learn initiative. Once contextualised within broader aspects of residential culture at SU, the initiative's successes and shortcomings are discussed. Chapter five attempts to make sense of some of these shortcomings, by drawing from Critical Whiteness Studies literature. This chapter seeks to not only contextualise whiteness at SU, but also to provide avenues of prospective transformative potential. Chapter six serves to conclude our discussion.

1.4. Methodology

This thesis comes in the form of a theoretical case study. This methodology, according to Pamela Baxter and Susan Jack, "provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts"[34]. The crux of this thesis' theoretical evidence has been garnered via desk-based qualitative research, using a combination of primary and secondary sources. The former comprises of, amongst others; policy documents, speeches, research data, public opinion surveys, video recordings and social media posts. The latter consists predominantly of journal and news articles, scholarly books and theses. In chapter five, I briefly introduce a piece of naturalistic observation, recorded during my second year at UCT in the midst of the #FeesMustFall protests. Naturalistic observation is described by Barbara Wells as a:

> "…nonexperimental, primarily qualitative research method in which organisms are studied in their natural settings. Behaviors or other phenomena of interest are observed and recorded by the researcher, whose presence might be either known or unknown to the subjects."[35]

In my case, my purpose was not revealed, as my intention was to observe behaviour within a large public convocation. As such, the environment was not manipulated, yielding valuable insight into behaviours that are, as Wells puts it, "…more characteristic, more spontaneous, and more diverse that those one might witness in a laboratory setting. In many instances, such events simply cannot be examined in a laboratory setting."[36] This lack of control, however, means that the data derived is descriptive rather than explanatory. In the case of this thesis, the observation is included to add a textured feel to the project, acting as a segway to stimulate further discussion. Nevertheless, the potential for observational bias remains. As Wells notes, "[p]erception of events might…be

[34] Pamela Baxter and Susan Jack, "Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers," *The Qualitative Report*, 13, 4, (2008): 544, http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss4/2.
[35] Barbara M. Wells, "Naturalistic Observation," in *Encyclopedia of research design*, ed. Neil J. Salkind (California: SAGE Publications, 2010), 1. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412961288.
[36] Ibid., 6.

influenced by any number of factors, including personal worldview"[37]. Indeed, this observational bias pertains to the thesis as a whole, given that any social research into human behaviour falls under the "observational" umbrella term.

1.4.1. Situating the 'Self'

Given my biological and socially constructed identity, I approach this area of interest with certain "insider-outsider" connotations[38]. As a UCT student, my focus on SU is done as an "outsider". However, the fact that I am a white male Afrikaner student with three generations of family members before me who have studied and taught at SU, provides an "insider" status to a certain extent. Thus, my insider-outsider positionality provides me with a unique perspective that combines objective and subjective reasoning. However, it also comes with elements of cognitive and researcher biases – such as cultural and confirmation bias. This has been acknowledged and attempts have been made to ensure minimisation thereof throughout this thesis. In order to generate coherency on top of this transparency, it is important to define some of the central transformative themes at play in SU. This serves, in part, as a brief literature review.

[37] Ibid., 7.

[38] As per Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer L. Buckle, "The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8, 1, (2009). https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800105

Chapter Two: Key Concepts

2.1. Whiteness

According to Rob Pattman, who conducted research into student identities "in a newly 'racially' merged university in South Africa": "whiteness has been extremely under-researched compared to other 'racial' identities"[39]. Pattman notes that this has been the focus of American social constructionists such as Ruth Frankenberg since the early 90's, who defined whiteness as "…the production and reproduction of dominance rather than subordination, normativity rather than marginality, and privilege rather than disadvantage"[40]. As Green et al note, this definition is fitting, as it "identifies whiteness as something that places white people in dominant positions and grants white people unfair privileges, while rendering these positions and privileges invisible to white people"[41]. Whiteness, as reiterated by Robin DiAngelo, is used "…to signify a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically and culturally produced, and which are intrinsically linked to dynamic relations of domination."[42] This dynamism is worth highlighting, as it serves to emphasise the fluidity and complexity of whiteness. Adding to this complexity, DiAngelo notes:

> "Whiteness is thus conceptualized as a constellation of processes and practices rather than as a discrete entity (i.e. skin color alone). Whiteness is dynamic, relational, and operating at all times and on myriad levels. These processes and practices include basic rights, values, beliefs, perspectives and experiences purported to be commonly shared by all but which are actually only consistently afforded to white people. Whiteness Studies begin with the premise that racism and white privilege exist in both traditional and modern forms, and rather than work to prove its

[39] Rob Pattman, "Student identities, and researching these, in a newly 'racially' merged university in South Africa," *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 10, 4, (2007): 482. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ779681.
[40] Ruth Frankenberg, *White women, race matters: The social construction of whiteness*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 236. Cited in Green, Sonn and Matsebula, "Reviewing whiteness," 390.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Robin DiAngelo, "White fragility," *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 3 (2011): 56, https://libjournal.uncg.edu/ijcp/article/download/249/116.

existence, work to reveal it."[43]

From a South African perspective, Green, Sonn & Matsebula provided a seminal review of whiteness in 2007[44]. The review was conducted in relation to existing theory and research, and possibilities for future foci of whiteness studies. The article uses South Africa and Australia as its two primary case studies in seeking to review whiteness and how its power and privilege is reproduced in said societies. Here, it is worth highlighting the criticism of Melissa Steyn in regards to the Green et al.'s focus on these two countries. Although there are many similarities between the two in regards to how whiteness has and is manifested, there are fundamental dissimilarities that cause disquiet for the aforementioned author. Namely, that whiteness in South Africa, due to its position as a (powerful) minority, contains distinctive features. In post-apartheid South Africa, whiteness has departed even further from the other "heartlands of whiteness", according to Steyn. She notes:

> "The power relations that supported the old social identities have been profoundly troubled. White South Africans cannot assume the same privileges, with such ease, when state power is overtly committed to breaking down racial privilege — though as some of the studies cited by Green et al. (2007) show, they certainly are trying to prolong its shelf life."[45]

Thus, South Africa provides a fertile ground of inquiry into whiteness.

Globally, there has been a shift of focus from the "normative" power of whiteness, to revealing its complexities and the ways in which it maintains dominance. The aforementioned work of DiAngelo deals with *white fragility*[46], Joseph Flynn with *white fatigue*[47] and Diane Goodman with *white resistance*[48].

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[43] Ibid., 66.
[44] Green, Sonn and Matsebula, "Reviewing whiteness."
[45] Ibid., 422.
[46] DiAngelo, "White fragility", 66.
[47] Joseph E. Flynn, "White Fatigue: Naming the Challenge in Moving from an Individual to a Systemic Understanding of Racism," *Multicultural Perspectives*, 17, 3, (2015): 115–124. https://doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2015.1048341.

Locally, whiteness studies have centred on "white talk" – or discursive strategies used by whiteness to distance itself from actionable responsibility through positive self-image preservation. Here the work of the Don Foster and the aforementioned Steyn is worth mentioning[49]. The latter author has also written extensively on white "ignorance"[50]. Other authors, such as Micheal Quayle and Cornelius Verwey have furthered this field of interest with their studies on "whiteness, racism and Afrikaner identity"[51]. As highlighted within Quayle and Verwey's findings, Afrikaner identity, though centred on whiteness, is complex and often contradictory. This is reiterated by Thomas Blaser's findings in his doctorate on Afrikaner youth identity[52]. Within Stellenbosch University, there have been several theses written on white student identity[53], along with discourse analyses[54]. Stellenbosch, with its Afrikaner history, thus offers an intriguing complexity in relation to whiteness, given the prominent interplay between 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'transformation'.

2.2. Transformation

Transformation remains a complex and contested term in South Africa. Simply put, it indicates positive change. However, in the context of South Africa's socio-economic inequality and history of racial segregation, transformation takes on contested meanings. It is often viewed as a means of redress in establishing a more equitable and proportionately representative society[55]. As Labby

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[48] Diane J. Goodman, "Promoting diversity and social justice: Educating people from privileged groups" (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011).
[49] Melissa Steyn and Don Foster, "Repertoires for talking white: Resistant whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31, 1, (2008): 25-51. DOI: 10.1080/0141987070153885
[50] Melissa Steyn (2012) The ignorance contract: recollections of apartheid childhoods and the construction of epistemologies of ignorance, Identities, 19:1, 8-25, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01419870701538851.
[51] Cornelius Verwey and Michael Quayle, "Whiteness, Racism, And Afrikaner Identity In Post-Apartheid South Africa", *African Affairs*, 111, 445 (2012): 551. https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/ads056.
[52] Thomas Micheal Blaser, "Afrikaner Identity After Nationalism: Young Afrikaners and the 'new' South Africa," PhD Diss., University of Witwatersrand, 2009, http://hdl.handle.net/10539/6325.
[53] Berenice Gwendoline Kriel, "The Adam Tas student association and the tension between Afrikaans identity and transformation at Stellenbosch University," Master's Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2016, http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/98797.
[54] See Jana Barnard, "Racial Discourse among White Afrikaans-speaking Youth: A Stellenbosch Case Study," Master's thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2010, http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/4243.
[55] See Ministry of Higher Education, *The White Paper 3 on transformation of higher education*. (Pretoria: Government Printers, 1997), http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/White_Paper3.pdf.

Ramrathan notes, this "…framework of equity through redress and social justice…sought to change the face of higher education through demographic changes. Hence higher education transformation largely took on a number-counting process."[56] Meaningful transformation, however, seeks to delve deeper than simple demographic shifts, as SU's Rector and Vice-Chancellor (VC) Professor Wim de Villiers notes: "At Stellenbosch we see transformation in a systemic way, not reductionist. Transformation is not a numbers game and a transformation strategy should not be a paint-by-numbers kit."[57] Since becoming VC in 2015, De Villiers has promulgated transformation to "the highest level" of importance within his institutional mandate[58], noting the complexities inherent within transformative process:

> "Stellenbosch University's journey of transformation is incomplete and imperfect, but we remain steadfast in our determination to go forward. We are committed and resolute. That is the only way of creating a community of "social justice and equal opportunities for all" – as our mission states."[59]

The mission statement will be discussed further in Chapter three. As Felix Banda and Lynn Mafofo argue, "transformation discourses" are susceptible to commodification. Their study examines the mission statements of three South African Universities, including SU and shows:

> "…that the ideology of a non-racial society and equal opportunities championed in post-apartheid South Africa as well as translocal and transnational demands for academic excellence have necessitated the need for South African universities to develop and cultivate new

[56] Labby Ramrathan, "Beyond counting the numbers: Shifting higher education transformation into curriculum spaces," *Transformation in Higher Education*, 1, 1, (2016): 6. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/the.v1i1.6

[57] Quote from a speech given by Professor Wim de Villiers at a Cape Times Breakfast on 4 October 2015. See *'Transformation at Stellenbosch University: What the future holds' – Rector*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 6 February, 2018, http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=2978.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

> entrepreneurial endeavours that are locally located and relevant but international in scope. Race as a defining feature of the universities has been replaced with commoditised discourses of transformation, redress, and equal opportunity."[60]

With this in mind, it must be assumed that transformation is inherently multifaceted and susceptible to influence by global and local forces. Due to brevity concerns within this mini-dissertation, transformation will be divided and analysed in two categories: "institutional transformation" and "relational transformation". This is not intended as an all-encompassing divisionary description of transformation. Nor is it intended as a deliberate dichotomisation. Instead, this broadly highlights two aspects of transformation – top-down and ground-up. In this sense, this thesis seeks to adopt a holistic approach to transformative justice, defined by Paul Gready and Simon Robins as an approach that "…situates violence on a continuum that spans interpersonal and structural violence, rather than simply focusing on acts of political violence"[61]. Here, the term "relational" is used as an umbrella term, which includes "interpersonal" factors but also intrapersonal and intercultural dynamics. In other words, "relational transformation" is used to indicate the complexity and centricity of relationships within transformative practice. This echoes "conflict transformation" schools of thought, which views conflict as normal and carrying transformative potential. Peace[62], in this regard, is viewed as contingent on the quality of relationships[63].

2.3. Race

From the outset, it is worth noting that this thesis does not necessarily agree with 'racial' categorisation. 'Race' and 'racial' categorisations were used in

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[60] Felix Banda and Lynn Mafofo, "Commodification of transformation discourses and post-apartheid institutional identities at three South African universities," *Critical Discourse Studies*, 13, 2, (2016): 190. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2015.1074593.

[61] Gready and Robins, "From Transitional to Transformative Justice: A New Agenda for Practice", 344.

[62] Peace is viewed in terms of "positive" peace (the absence of indirect forms of violence such a structural and cultural violence) and "negative" peace (the absence of direct forms of violence). See Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research*, 27, 3, (1990): 291-305.

[63] See John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation: Clear articulation of the guiding principles by a pioneer in the field*, (Good Books, 2003).

Apartheid South Africa as biological justifications to merit segregationist policies. Though some political scientists may still defend the use of 'race' in this regard, this essentialist rhetoric has since been discredited by the vast majority of (social) scientists and is now viewed as a social construct[64]. Two decades on, 'race' remains central to South African society and identity politics. Thus, various 'racial' classifications will be warily employed in this thesis to represent official classifications and not as a form of skewed embrace of said biological essentialism. Doing otherwise whilst studying this pertinent issue would provide incoherence, as Pattman's research on student identities at a newly "racially" merged University suggests:

> "'Race' emerged as a dominant theme in the research. Although I had asked my students to research student identities in general, all the various student groups they identified were racialised, and it seemed almost impossible for my students to research and write about student identities at UKZN without addressing 'race'."[65]

Steyn argues that 'race' can be viewed as an organising principle of inequality:

> "As one of the organizing principles of inequality in society that 'reproduce their own conditions of existence'…race is deeply implicated in the (re)production of our understandings of the world around us."[66]

Thus, when studying 'race' one inevitably ends up dealing with racism and its antithesis: anti-racism practice. But what exactly is racism? Flynn argues that there are, broadly speaking, two kinds of racism that exists – individual and systemic. The former is the more obvious of the two, as it deals with individualised notions of racialised prejudice and discrimination. The latter is

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[64] Bob Heere et al., "Questioning the Validity of Race as a Social Construct: Examining Race and Ethnicity in the 'Rainbow Nation'," *African Social Science Review*, 7, 1, (2015): 24-25. http://digitalscholarship.tsu.edu/assr/vol7/iss1/2

[65] Pattman, "Student identities, and researching these, in a newly 'racially' merged university in South Africa, Race Ethnicity and Education," 477.

[66] Melissa Steyn, "The ignorance contract: recollections of apartheid childhoods and the construction of epistemologies of ignorance", *Identities*, 19, 1, (2012): 11, https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2012.672840.

viewed here as distinct but mutually reinforcing towards *white privilege*. It comes in more covert, institutionalised forms. It is often harder to tangibly identify, but is often pervasively received by the racially oppressed subject. Hence the challenge for anti-racism practice, according to Flynn, is often educative in nature, in shifting understanding from individual to institutional or systemic forms of racism[67]. Joel Modiri notes the importance of establishing said systemic understanding of 'race':

> "Such a conception of race avoids and challenges the now prevalent view that identifies the eradication of racism and racial progress with the transcendence of a racially conscious standpoint – with the result being a racial ideology premised upon colour-blindness, race-neutrality and post-racialism."[68]

For the purposes of this essay, the term 'anti-racism' practice will fall under the umbrella term of 'transformative' practice. These terms are to be held as distinct yet mutually reinforcing. For instance, from a pedagogical perspective, a more nuanced understanding of (anti-) racism (in terms of its structural connotations) may lead to a more nuanced understanding (and perhaps support) of transformation. When dealing with transformation, 'race' does not encompass the complexities of individual and/or group identities in times of flux. As such ethnicity is now discussed[69].

2.4. Ethnicity

The work of Bob Heere et al. questions the validity of 'race' as a social construct. The authors posit "…that using racial labeling to understand population

[67] Flynn, "White Fatigue: Naming the Challenge in Moving from an Individual to a Systemic Understanding of Racism."
[68] Joel M. Modiri, "The Colour Of Law, Power And Knowledge: Introducing Critical Race Theory In (Post-) Apartheid South Africa," 28 *SAJHR*, (2012): 411, https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/21791.
[69] Further complicating intersections have not been added due to brevity concerns within this mini-dissertation. These include, but are not limited to: gender, sexuality and disability. "Intersectionality" is discussed in section 2.5.

behaviors and beliefs might mask ethnic differences within each racial group."[70] This thesis was supported by their data, noting significant differences (measured in terms of "race, ethnic identity, national identity and social capital"), between the various ethnic groups within each 'race' category. In addition, the authors found:

> "…ethnic identity was highly predictive of social capital among our sample, which even superseded the predictive power of national identity. This result alone underlines the importance of understanding how individuals identify with their ethnicity, over and above that of their nation."[71]

Whiteness at SU must thus be ethnicised (namely in terms of Anglicisation and Afrikanerisation) in order to provide a nuanced understanding of the forces at play within the institution. Scholars who have focused on the idiosyncrasies of Afrikaner ethnicity include Christi van der Westhuizen and Theresa Edlmann. Van der Westhuizen's work on "inward migration and enclave nationalism"[72] has recently been published in her book "Sitting Pretty: White Afrikaans Women in Postapartheid South Africa". Edlmann focuses on the psychosocial legacies of compulsory conscription during the Apartheid wars. She observes the prominence of "discursive *laagers*" or defensive and insulated discursive strategies[73]. Both authors place a heavy importance on historicised context and thus this facet must be considered when discussing broader notions of national identity, in order to offer sufficient contextualisation. As Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni descriptively notes:

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[70] Heere et al., "Questioning the Validity of Race as a Social Construct: Examining Race and Ethnicity in the 'Rainbow Nation'," 40.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Christi van der Westhuizen, "Afrikaners in post-apartheid South Africa: Inward migration and enclave nationalism," *HTS Teologiese Studies*, 72, 1, (2016): 1-9, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i4.3351.
[73] Theresa Edlmann, "Division in the (Inner) Ranks: The Psychosocial Legacies of the Border Wars", *South African Historical Journal*, 64, 2, (2012): 256-272, https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473.2012.661450.

> "South African national identity is, if not a failing national project, at least very much a contested work in progress, which is open to different interpretations and trajectories. This proposition is given credence by the fact that racialised and ethnicised identities formed under imperialism, colonialism, and apartheid continue to hang like a nightmare on the body politic of the rainbow nation, refusing to die, and continuing to throw up toxic questions around issues of belonging, citizenship, entitlement and ownership of resources like land and mines."[74]

In applying Ndlovu-Gatsheni's argument, it is worth noting as a finishing point that transformative justice, in resembling "positive peace", can never be achieved without socio-economic and reparative justice. Thus, the examination here of whiteness is seen as a cog in the wheel of a holistic understanding of transformation at Stellenbosch. How then, do we make sense of the various aforementioned complexities relating, but not limited to, 'race', ethnicity, whiteness and transformation? Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies offer unique theoretical perspectives on said complexities.

Theory

2.5. Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Originating from the US, CRT seeks to "examine, from a legal perspective, the ways in which prevailing conceptions of 'race' (and to some extent, culture and identity) perpetuate relations of domination, oppression and injustice"[75]. It has been explicitly applied to post-Apartheid South Africa by several authors including Joel Modiri, whose work will form the basis of this segment explaining CRT. Modiri highlights that CRT, as a "form of critical engagement with race and law" is aptly suited for the South African context due to the country's "…long history of institutionalised white supremacy and white racial privilege which today coexists with on-going (and lingering) forms of anti-black racism and

[74] Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Racialised ethnicities and ethnicised races: reflections on the making of South Africanism," *African Identities*, 10, 4, (2012): 407.
[75] Modiri, "The Colour Of Law, Power And Knowledge," 405.

racial exclusion"[76]. Though CRT is a "…vast and diverse body of scholarship"[77], Modiri extrapolates six key theoretical tenets of CRT, emphasising how it provides a means of non-conformity to "…western notions of rationality, neutrality and objectivity"[78]. The most pertinent of these tenets, for the purposes of this thesis, are CRT's "critique of liberalism", "anti-essentialism", support of "intersectionality", and emphasis on "historical analysis"[79].

Critique of liberalism

According to Modiri:

> "Liberalism views racism from the 'perpetrator perspective' whereby racism is conceived as an irrational, abberational [sic.] act committed by a conscious wrongdoer often deviating from fair and impartial ways of treating fellow humans, distributing jobs, power, prestige and wealth."[80]

This approach, as a means of viewing racial intolerance as individual forms of irregular behaviour, serves to minimise the structural aspect of racism. Thus, CRT scholars seek to argue, "…that racism should be seen as systemic and ingrained in the social culture and reinforced through the reproduction of political power and reasoning"[81]. This, as a result, "rejects liberalism's cautious approach to transformation – particularly the insistence on 'colour-blind politics' and exclusively rights-based approaches (like anti-discrimination legislation) to resolving racial problems"[82]. Finally, alongside this critique of liberalism, CRT brings into question the validity of notions of meritocracy. Meritocracy, in short, is the idea that success or benefits are earned on the basis of talent or work-related achievement. This, according to CRT, obfuscates structural disadvantage and presumes that laws or policies have equal effect. This has particular pertinence for enrolment policies at tertiary level institutions such as SU.

[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 414.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Other theoretical tenets include: "structural determinism" and "storytelling, narrative and 'naming one's own reality'". Ibid.
[80] Ibid., 415.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.

Anti–essentialism

This is an analytical tool used to highlight the complexity of identity, by noting that it "…cannot be fixed, categorised or boxed into a common experience with one singular essence"[83]. The use of such categorisation has been previously discussed in section 2.3. and although it can be controversial, it is also accepted that contemporary categorisation (on foot of Apartheid-era categorisation) needs to occur in order to achieve redress and more just representivity. Here there remains a tension between CRT's rejection of essentialism and support of 'race'-consciousness. Thus, the call is not for categorisation to be dismissed altogether, but rather its simplicity and lack of nuance in application. This is a form of "strategic essentialism" invoked by CRT scholars "as a way to articulate racial issues and the plight of black people as a group, while not arrogating to itself the position of a voice that claims to speak for all"[84]. Though focusing specifically on law, the following passage from Modiri is worth noting in order to highlight the importance of anti-essentialism in a South African context:

> "CRT's emphasis on anti-essentialism is important to law in general and post-apartheid law in particular in order to counter law's inherent rigidity and its predilection for universalism and abstract categorisation especially given the careless and oppressive use of race and gender categories during apartheid, and their strategic and instrumental use in 'post'-apartheid South Africa."

This remains relevant to SU, in providing a theoretical lens to question whether essentialism is at play within the institutions various transformative policies.

Intersectionality

[83] Ibid., 416.

[84] Ibid. The use of "whiteness" within this thesis serves as a form of strategic essentialism, in serving to highlight its structural dimensions. Detailed contextualisation of whiteness is provided throughout this thesis, with particular reference to Chapter five, so as to provide nuance in avoiding overarching essentialism. Discussed further in section 2.6.

Due to brevity concerns, this thesis cannot unpack every ingrained structure within Stellenbosch that deserves transformative attention. These include, but are not limited to, systems of patriarchy[85] and issues regarding sexuality and gender-based inclusivity. Class-based analysis is also noted here as an important theoretical avenue that has been considered but not chosen as the central focus of this paper. In this sense, the author shares the opinion of Paula Bravemen, who notes:

> "Weighing race and class against each other is based on a false construct. Given the history of racism, even if all interpersonal racism were eliminated, the institutional structures that shape people's opportunities in life from early childhood—for example, by determining their parents' and their own educational and employment opportunities—are so powerful that we would continue to see huge racial/ethnic differences in many… outcomes."[86]

This passage remains particularly pertinent in South Africa's context, given Apartheid's systematic focus on race. As such, the focus on "whiteness" at SU is exploratory of what is believed to be a core, but not all-encompassing, systemic influence at SU and indeed nationally. Here, the growing field of *Intersectionality Theory* is worth bearing in mind, for example, the work of Nira Yuval-Davis[87]. This theory, sprouting consequentially from anti-essentialism, attempts to showcase how various social ills or "-*isms*" such as racism, sexism, classism and ableism, and other forms of prejudices and phobias, are interrelated. Rather than acting independently from one another, these factors are interwoven and are compounding in nature; thus the call for oppression and injustice to be viewed at the various "intersections" of these interrelations. For example, the struggles of a white middle-class woman cannot be conflated with the struggles of a black

[85] For an extensive analysis of "white Afrikaans women" and how they have renegotiated their identities in post-Apartheid South Africa see Christi van der Westhuizen, *Sitting Pretty: White Afrikaans Women in Postapartheid South Africa*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2017).

[86] Paula Braveman, "The question is *not*: 'Is race or class more important?'"*Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 59, 1029, (2005), https://jech.bmj.com/content/59/12/1029.

[87] Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13, 3, (2006): 193 – 209, https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506806065752.

and/or lesbian and/or poor and/or disabled woman. That is not to say that the former does not experience patriarchal oppression (or otherwise), but simply to state that said oppression is experienced differently. Modiri showcases the relevance of intersectionality in South Africa:

> "Customary law issues such as male primogeniture, ukuthwala and polygamy; the provision of health-care services for people with HIV/AIDS in rural communities; the situation and harsh labour conditions of domestic workers as well as the phenomenon of 'curative' rapes inflicted on black lesbians are among some South African examples that demonstrate the relevance of intersectional analysis"[88]

Relating to youth, the customary colloquialism of the "black tax"[89] is worth adding to this list of examples.

Multidisciplinary historical analysis

Modiri lists historical analysis as a central tenet of CRT. He adds that insights from social science and multidisciplinary thinking serve as a basis to develop nuanced exposés of how "…white supremacy and anti-black racism has been created and maintained"[90]. As Modiri explains: "Such a contextualised historical analysis of the effects of past and present racial hierarchies is common to CRT in that it challenges the presumptive legitimacy and normalised practices of societal institutions."[91] Thus, this thesis draws from literature from various fields ranging from various social sciences and law to multidisciplinary fields of inquiry such as transitional justice and peacebuilding. The primary goal of utilising CRT is to establish whiteness as a contemporarily pervasive force at SU. Following this, whiteness will be unpacked, predominantly at a relational level, using Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS).

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[88] Modiri, "The Colour Of Law, Power And Knowledge," 418.

[89] Described by Mosibudi Ratlebjane as "…the extra money that black professionals are coughing up every month to support their extended families. If you are lucky enough to have a job, it is seen as your duty to subsidise relatives who are less well off." See Mosibudi Ratlebjane, "How 'black tax' cripples our youth's aspirations", *Mail & Guardian*, 30 October, 2015. https://mg.co.za/article/2015-10-29-how-black-tax-cripples-our-youths-aspirations (accessed 5 February 2018).

[90] Modiri, "The Colour Of Law, Power And Knowledge," 420.

[91] Ibid.

2.6. Critical Whiteness Studies

As whiteness has already been expanded upon in section 2.1., this section serves to highlight the overlap between Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) and CRT, and some of the criticisms related to its application. CWS, often referred to as "whiteness studies" or "critical whiteness theory", is seen as an offshoot of CRT. Unlike CRT, however, CWS focuses on the various ways in which whiteness functions and maintains itself. Though different in its specificity of focus, CWS shares similar theoretical goals in that it seeks to establish nuance through historically contextualised analysis. Though it offers illuminating insights into societal function, it should not be seen as all encompassing or explanatory. As Garth Stevens cautions: "…whiteness studies may be incorrectly perceived as a 'silver bullet' for understanding and combating racism, rather than as a complementary and often secondary critical tool for anti racist praxis."[92] As previously mentioned, CWS has been traditionally focussed on the ways in which whiteness renders itself normative in nature. Thus, there exists a contradiction in terms of its aims (to establish nuance) and findings (generalised normativity). Thus, more recent CWS scholars have sought to establish nuance within this overarching normativity, by establishing connections between localised "micro sites" and global dimensions of whiteness[93]. This has been referred to as the "third wave" of whiteness studies. As Steve Garner notes:

> "Indeed the third wave is about juggling the micro and the macro; about how whiteness functions in different national scenarios, and in an array of institutional and everyday contexts. Indeed, both micro and macro forces are at play"

In this sense, SU is viewed as a well-suited site of enquiry into this complex juggling act. The use of cross-cultural references i.e. global CWS literature will be

[92] Garth Stevens, "Tactical reversal or re-centring whiteness? A response to Green, Sonn, and Matsebula," *South African Journal of Psychology*, 37, 3, (2007): 427, https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630703700303.

[93] See Steve Garner, "Surfing the third wave of whiteness studies: reflections on Twine and Gallagher," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40, 9, (2017): 4–24, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1300301.

used as an illuminative tool. Furthermore, where cross-cultural references are included, local literature will be applied to showcase overlapping justifications for their inclusion. A final qualification is required, in defending the use of CWS as a lens of enquiry. A common criticism of CWS is that it serves to re-centre that which it seeks to destabilise – whiteness. Authors such as Donald Hook have made this criticism of whiteness studies[94]. It is submitted, however, that this criticism enjoys validity, if the analysis of whiteness is seen as an endpoint in and of itself. This thesis seeks to circumscribe this criticism by using CWS with facilitative intent. In other words, CWS will be used to provide facilitators or transformative policy with a more nuanced understanding of whiteness (at SU). On foot of this deconstructive understanding, it is hoped that constructive engagement will follow. Indeed, ensuring the provision of said engagement is no easy task, and thus CWS is invoked here as a complementary approach in relation to much needed holism within transformation practice. This framework aims to provide a better understanding of the pervasive power of whiteness and its unproductive forces, in relation to transformation at SU. Given that other HAU campuses are experiencing similar transformative tension(s), there may be wider application to these findings.

[94] Donald Hook, "Retrieving Biko: a Black Consciousness critique of whiteness," *African Identities*, 9, 01, (2011): 22-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2011.530442.

Chapter Three: Institutional Transformation

3.1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to highlight the complexities of transformative practice at an institutional level. This will be achieved through contemporary and historical contextualisation. The starting point for institutional transformation is policy change. SU has implemented several transformative policies over the past few years, showcasing *prima facie* institutional intent to transform. This chapter seeks to explore whether this intent has translated into practice. The contextualisation of the various policies is intended to bring into question the neutrality and efficacy of SU's transformative policies, viewing policy not only as a product, but also a process. Due to the limited word count within this mini-dissertation, this chapter cannot provide an exhaustive analysis of institutional transformation at SU. Moreover, an analysis of a recently invoked policy such as the Language Policy will be purely speculative in terms of quantifying its impact. To add to an earlier point, institutional transformation takes time, as does policy impact. Nevertheless, the content of the policies deserve attention. As such, the policy documents, as a primary source, will be examined. Here, CRT will be used as a theoretical framework to provide cautionary criticism. Ultimately, this examination will highlight an apparent aspect of whiteness that hinders effective institutional transformation. This serves as a starting point for the succeeding and interrelating chapter on relational transformation.

3.2. Complexity of transformation and policy

Transformation, and transformatory policy, is inherently complex and multifaceted. As Reitumetse Mabokela highlights, "the first challenge ... is defining the term transformation" because "there are as many interpretations and understandings of this concept as there are participants"[95]. Universally, however, the various conceptions of transformation that Mabokela notes, all allude, in one way or another, to a *change* in some form or another. This seemingly obvious point needs to be taken into account when viewing

[95] Reitumetse Obakeng Mabokela, *Voices of Conflict: Desegregating South African Universities*, (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2000), 3, cited in Kriel, "The Adam Tas student association and the tension between Afrikaans identity and transformation at Stellenbosch University," 17.

(transformative) policy – especially when examining whether whiteness, at SU, has *changed*. As Leslie Bell and Howard Stevenson point out in their extensive analysis of education policy:

> "Change, by definition, undermines the status quo. Existing practices are often questioned, traditional assumptions can be threatened and values may be challenged. Change is seldom neutral – there are winners and losers, those who benefit from proposed policy changes and those who pay. It is therefore a process that requires action and will generate reaction."[96]

A qualification needs to be made between various forms of change that can occur. Doug Reeler, provides a theory of social change that offers a tripartite definition of change. Change, according to Reeler, is emergent, transformative or projectable[97]. His definition attempts to recognise the diversity of social change with the "transformative" aspect being particularly noteworthy for the purposes of this study. For Reeler, transformative change is naturally filled with crises (or "stuckness"), which are "…the product of a social beings entering into tense or contradictory relationships with their world, prompted by shifts in external political, economic, cultural or environmental contexts."[98] He continues:

> "Crisis or stuckness sets the stage for transformative change. Unlike emergent change, which is characterised as a learning process, transformative change is more about unlearning, of freeing the social being from those relationships and identities, inner and outer, which underpin the crisis and hold back resolution and further healthy development."[99]

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[96] Leslie Bell and Howard Stevenson. *Education policy: process, themes and impact*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 22.
[97] Doug Reeler, "A three-fold theory of social change", *The Centre for Developmental Practice*, 2007, http://www.cdra.org.za/uploads/1/1/1/6/111664/threefold_theory_of_change_-_and_implications_for_pme_-_doug_reeler_of_the_cdra.pdf (accessed 2 January 2018).
[98] Ibid., 11.
[99] Ibid., 11-12.

Although there are several influencing "external" factors, the passivity of the subject is brought into question during said "unlearning process". Here, the subject becomes active and dictates his/her *reaction* to his/her surroundings.

In the concluding chapter this sentiment, regarding *reactionary* politics will be brought into question. Namely, can *reaction*, via facilitation or otherwise, be transformed into (relational) *response*? Remaining institutionally focused, reactive politics may have grave ramifications and connotations. For instance, Nolan León Cabrera argues that reactionism within an educational institution (in a US context) is one way of perpetuating white supremacy:

> "…[P]roportional representation is only part of the higher education perpetuation of white supremacy. Other methods include an institutional stance on racism that is reactive instead of proactive, the exclusion of diversity in the mission statement, concentration of institutional power in white (often male) administrators, minimal representation of faculty of color, and a reliance upon 'traditional pedagogies' that disregard teaching across racial difference."[100]

Applied cross-contextually to SU, Cabrera's statement has overlapping resonance. Arguably SU does not share the following with Cabrera's statement generalised statement: an "exclusion of diversity" in its "mission statement", and "proportional representation". In terms of the former, SU's mission statement contains an intent to "[l]everage the inherent power of diversity"[101]. Here, the use of the word *leverage*, rather than a facilitative term such as *increase* or *foster* is perhaps questionable from a semantic perspective. In terms of the latter, there is a further point to make, which, on paper, distinguishes SU from the criticism of Cabrera. As has been highlighted above, there is in fact a *dis*proportionate

[100] Nolan León Cabrera, "Exposing whiteness in higher education: white male college students minimizing racism, claiming victimization, and recreating white supremacy," R*ace Ethnicity and Education*, 17, 1, (2014): 32, https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2012.725040.
[101] *Stellenbosch University Institutional Intent and Strategy 2013-2018*, Stellenbosch University, 7, accessed 12 January, 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/management/rector/Documents/Institutional%20Intent%20and%20Strategy%202013-2018.pdf.

representation of white students at SU. This, despite being a differentiation in fact further entrenches SU within the focus of Cabrera's white supremacy thesis. Bell and Stevenson on the other hand argue, "[t]he tensions and conflicts that flow from these responses therefore need to be seen as inevitable and not irrational"[102]. In using this logic, i.e. the inevitability of conflict following policy change, a question emerges. Should *proactive* conflict transformation/management/resolution, initiatives be included within the policy?

Returning our focus to policy, generally, a similar conceptual complexity to that of *transformation* arises. As Bell and Stevenson note:

> "What is understood by 'policy', how it is conceptualized, requires a broad understanding of a range of inter-related processes. What is often presented as policy is frequently no more than a statement of intent, a plan of action or a set of guidelines. At one level the purpose of such policies may appear clear, but it is important to locate policy within a wider context. Policy is about the power to determine what gets done, or not done. These are profoundly political issues."[103]

Who then, in the case of SU, has the determining *power*? Critical Race Theory points us in the direction of examining power structures in relation to white privilege[104]. Historically, SU played a central structural role during Apartheid. Aside from SU's alumni, which contains key apartheid era leaders, the campus itself was a site of great political turmoil. As the SU website notes,

> "Stellenbosch University could not escape the political turmoil of the apartheid era. Parts of mid-campus were built in "Die Vlakte" (Afrikaans for 'The Flats'), the area between the modern-day Victoria, Bird and Joubert streets and Banhoek Road. Die Vlakte was home to many coloured

[102] Bell and Stevenson, "Education Policy: process, themes and impact", 22.
[103] Ibid., 23.
[104] *What is Critical Race Theory?*, UCLA School of Public Affairs, accessed 16 January, 2018, https://spacrs.wordpress.com/what-is-critical-race-theory/.

> residents of Stellenbosch, but was subject to forced removals in terms of the Group Areas Act (Act 41 of 1950), which was promulgated on 27 April, the day on which South Africa today celebrates Freedom Day. The Act was aimed at segregating the various racial groups into separate residential areas."[105]

This is an example of how structural whiteness developed within SU. Today, SU's staff demography remains majority white. Most buildings around the town remain painted physically white, while spaces, for many, remain tainted white. This, in part, remains a historical legacy of Apartheid and colonialism, and thus should not be viewed in isolation. As Moeketsi Letseka and Simeon Maile note, this:

> "…[S]hould be seen as part of the larger historical picture of South Africa, one that is marked by centuries of white settler occupation and colonisation. Domination, hegemony, institutionalised racial segregation and entrenched marginalisation of blacks were all aimed at securing land and labour to drive the largely agricultural and industrial economy."[106]

Pervasive whiteness created deep-rooted structures that served the interests of white people, at the expense of people of colour. The systems were ultimately self-serving, in that they instituted whiteness as a normalising force. The white institutions brought with them institutional racism as per Marzia Milazzo who defines institutional racism as "…the normalisation of white supremacy in institutions, laws, policies, and practices that produce racially differential access to jobs, organisations, services, spaces, wealth, and so forth"[107]. The question, according to CRT, is not whether these institutional injustices have carried over into the new dispensations, but rather, to what extent.

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[105] *Historical Background*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 3 January, 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/about-us/historical-background.

[106] *High university drop-out rates: a threat to South Africa's future*, HSRC Policy Brief, 2008, http://www.hsrc.ac.za/uploads/pageContent/3330/2008marDropout%20rates.pdf (accessed 15 January, 2018).

[107] Marzia Milazzo, "On White Ignorance, White Shame, and Other Pitfalls in Critical Philosophy of Race Journal of Applied Philosophy," 34, 4, (2017): 564, http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/japp.12230.

According to their website, SU's executive management consists almost entirely of white men[108] – with the exception of Prof Nico Koopman (Vice-Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel), a coloured man, and Prof Hester Klopper (Vice-Rector: Strategy and Internationalisation); a white woman. A similar finding occurs when looking at the various department deans. Seven out of the ten departmental deans are "white" (five of which are male), with the remaining three deans consisting of three "BCI" men – one of each respective category[109]. Thus, whilst the new Language Policy will allow you to enter campus and not be formally forced to speak Afrikaans – you will be greeted by a majority white populace, including a majority white (male) management and deanship. With this context, it must be questioned whether the new Language Policy – despite intending to improve *access* – will improve *success*ful campus integration, given the context of overarching institutional whiteness.

3.3. Historical context of Language Policy

The *taaldebat*, and the 2016 Language Policy, in accordance with CRT, must be situated within a broader, historicised context. Worth noting from the outset, is the fact that the nexus between language transformation and education access issues are not exclusive to SU. On 15 January 2018, national attention shifted to Hoërskool Overvaal, located in Vereeniging, Gauteng. The school was the site of clashes between protesters and police, following the refusal to admit 55 English learners to the high school that currently only uses Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. The school was deemed to be acting lawfully by the North Gauteng High Court, in refusing to follow Gauteng Education Department's orders to enrol the English-speaking students[110]. The Department has indicated that it will appeal the decision. With attention drawn and camera's pointing, racial tensions came to a head outside the school, with parents, police and protesters clashing.

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[108] *General Management*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 18 January, 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/management.
[109] *Deans*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 18 January, 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/management/Pages/Deans0407-6482.aspx.
[110] *WATCH: Judgment in Afrikaans school saga*, ENCA, 15 January, 2018, https://www.enca.com/south-africa/judgment-expected-monday-in-gauteng-afrikaans-school-saga-but-mec-not-hopeful (accessed 16 January 2018).

The school claims, with backing from the North Gauteng High Court (judgement delivered by Judge Prinsloo), that it has insufficient capacity to enrol the students, whilst protesters claim that the policy is motivated by racism, with language being used as a barrier for access. Indeed, a similar issue was raised recently in the Constitutional Court of South Africa, in the matter of *AfriForum and Another v University of the Free State*[111]. Chief Justice Mogoeng held that the University's Language Policy (which made English the primary medium of instruction) was "consistent with the ministerial policy framework and the Constitution of the Republic"[112] and therefore its adoption was deemed lawful and valid. Here, a clear stand was taken by the honourable Chief Justice in prioritising a "constitutionally-inspired transformational agenda"[113]. He states:

> "The use of Afrikaans has unintentionally become a facilitator of ethnic or cultural separation and racial tension. And this has been so from around 2005 to 2016. Its continued use would leave the results of white supremacy not being redressed but kept alive and well. It is for that reason that a policy revision or intervention has since become necessary. The link between racially segregated lectures and racial tensions has not been denied. While it may be practicable to retain Afrikaans as a major medium of instruction, it certainly cannot be "reasonably practicable" when race relations is poisoned thereby. Logic dictates that if there was a known way of addressing racial tension and other concerns relating to the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, it would not only have been stated by the aggrieved parties but also implemented."[114]

In contextualising the policy, we follow Krishnavani Shervani Pillay's line of reasoning in which she asserts that well formulated policies must be placed under contextual and continual criticism. In relation to university transformation policies, the author states:

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[111] AfriForum and Another v University of the Free State [2017] ZACC 48.
[112] Ibid., pp. 79.
[113] Ibid., pp. 7.
[114] Ibid., pp. 63.

> "The university remains one institution that is under severe pressure to transform. This pressure is exacerbated by the deeply entrenched apartheid legacy that remains rooted in these institutions, despite very progressive policies that have been put in place…even the most substantive policy texts demand continual political scrutiny during their enactment if they are to fulfil their ideals…it highlights the need to move beyond uncritical belief in the strength of well-formulated policies/good policy initiatives to obtain socio-political goals such as social justice."[115]

Pillay's research focussed on historically white English-speaking universities. HAU's, unlike their historically English-speaking counterparts, have had an added transformative hurdle – language transformation. Afrikaans, for many, symbolises much more than just a language – it forms a core part of their identity. For others, it triggers painful memories and illuminates contemporary injustices. For this reason alone, a brief synopsis of the language's history within the context of Apartheid must be mentioned.

Apartheid was a system that ran on the sentient fuel of Afrikaner nationalism. This ideology, as noted by Cornelius Verwey, is a "complex, interwoven mesh of religious mandates, racial purity, patriarchy, struggle against oppression and struggle for an own language"[116]. Every facet of life was divided across exclusivist lines; access to employment, education and dwelling (amongst others), were ethnically contingent. Afrikaner nationalism provided ideological legitimacy to the National Party, which, from 1948 onwards, ruled with an authoritarian grip for three and a half decades. During this time, an "Afrikaner identity" was promulgated to the epicentre of societal workings. This identity was reinforced and "encapsulated in a network of schools, social clubs, churches, cultural and business organisations which created a self-referential Afrikaner

[115] Krishnavani Shervani Pillay, "Analysing Policy Contexts as a Political Strategy," *Policy Futures in Education*, 12, 5, (2014): 707, http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2014.12.5.707.
[116] Cornelius Verwey, "Jy weet, jy kan jouself vandag in k*kstraat vind deur jouself 'n Afrikaner te noem…' ('You know, you can find yourself in sh*tstreet by calling yourself an Afrikaner today…'): Afrikaner identity in post-Apartheid South Africa," Master's thesis, University of KwaZulu Natal, 2008, 14. http://hdl.handle.net/10413/183.

ideological world"[117]. This network, coupled with a carefully maintained national press, ensured that closed systems of knowledge transmission were upheld[118]. SU was one of several key sites for said knowledge transmission – solely using Afrikaans as its communicative vehicle. The remnants of these closed systems of transmission, according to Jonathan Jansen, have partially carried over into the "new" South Africa. He argues that knowledge transmission – both direct and indirect – still to this day plays a pivotal role in the formation of Afrikaner youth identity[119].

Several theses have been written on the topic of "Afrikaner identity", including Thomas Micheal Blaser, who has written a doctoral thesis on "Afrikaner Identity After Nationalism: Young Afrikaners and the "new" South Africa"[120], Cornelius Verwey[121] who focussed on participants in Bloemfontein and Charlotte Sutherland, who specifically focussed on Afrikaner students[122] at the University of Pretoria. Most recently, and perhaps most pertinent to this thesis is the work of Berenice Gwendoline Kriel, whose thesis is on "The Adam Tas student association and the tension between Afrikaans identity and transformation at Stellenbosch University"[123]. These theses not only show the contemporary academic interest in this area, but also found diverging responses to the complex topic of Afrikaner identity. Some authors, like Melissa Steyn, holds that there is a collective identity crisis at play within the Afrikaner Community (similar to the contextual surroundings that gave birth to the original rise in Afrikaner nationalism)[124]. Sutherland's research holds the opposite, with the author

[117] Jonathan Hyslop, "Why did Apartheid's supporters capitulate? 'Whiteness', class and consumption in urban South Africa, 1985-1995." *Society in transition,* 31, 1, (2000): 37, https://doi-org.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/10.1080/21528586.2000.10419009.
[118] See generally Jonathan Jansen, *Knowledge in the Blood: Confronting Race and the Apartheid Past,* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2009).
[119] Ibid., 51-82.
[120] Blaser, "Afrikaner Identity After Nationalism: Young Afrikaners and the "new" South Africa".
[121] Verwey, "Jy weet, jy kan jouself vandag in k*kstraat vind deur jouself 'n Afrikaner te noem...' ('You know, you can find yourself in sh*tstreet by calling yourself an Afrikaner today...'): Afrikaner identity in post-Apartheid South Africa", 14.
[122] Charlotte Sutherland, "Afrikaner student identity in post apartheid South Africa: A case study," Master's Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2013, https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/25679.
[123] Kriel, "The Adam Tas student association and the tension between Afrikaans identity and transformation at Stellenbosch University."
[124] Melissa Steyn, "Rehabilitating a whiteness disgraced: Afrikaner white talk in post apartheid South Africa," *Communication Quarterly, 52*, (2004): 143-169.

holding that her subjects are in fact not experiencing an identity crisis[125]. Blaser, on the other hand, suggests that Afrikaners are experiencing multiple identities:

> "I want to suggest that young Afrikaners do not have one dominant but multiple identities: speaking different languages and moving between different ethnicities, making personal and professional choices and so on, contribute to 17 creating and re-creating identities. Contradictions appear. Looking to the future, one wants to reach out and shape a new identity with the Other, but there is also a desire to value tradition, culture and language and take pride in it."[126]

With this complex context of Afrikaner identity flux in mind, it is worth returning to the earlier point made by Bell and Stevenson regarding the fact that "change is seldom neutral". When said change is related to a core feature of an individual or group of individuals (culture), change becomes difficult to process rationally, and inherently more complicated to achieve. Here the work of Jonathan Jansen, in his book "Knowledge in the Blood", is worth noting:

> "…But political and cultural identities are not like an overcoat that can be slipped off as easily as weather changes; they are a much more complex and constrained process in which change exists alongside continuity, and the preparedness to change is not unconditional, divorced from self-interest, or without contradictions."[127]

Notably, Jansen's has recently been appointment as a distinguished professor in the faculty of Education at SU. Whilst this is certainly an interesting development, it is simply too soon to tell whether the former vice-chancellor of the University of the Free State (a HAU confronted with similar transformative struggles) will be a pedagogically positive addition. Nevertheless, with the

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https://doi.org/10.1080/01463370409370187.

[125] Sutherland, "Afrikaner student identity in post apartheid South Africa: A case study," 210.

[126] Blaser, "Afrikaner Identity After Nationalism: Young Afrikaners and the "new" South Africa", 17.

[127] Jansen, *Knowledge in the Blood: Confronting Race and the Apartheid Past,* 250-251.

historical context of the Language Policy established, we turn now to dissect its content through CRT.

3.4. Reflections drawing on Critical Race Theory

The recent Language Policy at SU was not constructed and implemented within a vacuum. Kees (CS) van der Waal, in part confirming Pillay's thesis, asserts that"[l]anguage movements are political movements in disguise"[128]. Van der Waal provides a detailed lineage of the language politics at play within the various language "struggles", including a focus on SU. He notes that previous language policies enacted by the university encountered stiff opposition, with several polls indicating that students were strongly in favour of maintaining Afrikaans, whilst staff were "more open to a policy of accommodation"[129]. In 2005, "[a] petition signed by 3,500 students and staff and a letter signed by 143 Afrikaans authors were submitted to the management of the university in protest to the perceived demise of Afrikaans."[130] Over a decade later, similar resistance has occurred to the most recent Language Policy enacted by SU. For Van der Waal, this resistance is emblematic of what shall be referred to as "defensive whiteness" for the remainder of this thesis:

> "The language 'struggle' at Stellenbosch University exemplified a white-ness defending the place of white Afrikaans-speakers in higher education and ultimately their access to work opportunities, networks of economic power and the protection of symbolic power in the face of the demands for transformation and access for all to higher education institutions. …Stellenbosch, remaining the prime symbol of Afrikaner elitism and regionally well-placed in a concentration of Afrikaans-speakers, remains a setting for a heated language struggle in which language politics is often depoliticised by the myopic focus on language issues in isolation from the challenge of racial transformation."[131]

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[128] C. S. van der Waal, "Creolisation and Purity: Afrikaans Language Politics in Post-Apartheid Times," *African Studies*, 71, 3, (2012): 446-463, https://doi.org/10.1080/00020184.2012.740886.
[129] Ibid., 452-453.
[130] Ibid., 452.
[131] Ibid., 455.

In building on Pillay's framework and Van der Waal's argument, the previous section invoked one of the key theoretical tenets of CRT by politicising and historicising the language "struggle" at SU. It also adhered to non-essentialism by contextualising Afrikaner identity. The relationship between the historicised policy and the contextualised identity highlighted a defensive whiteness, in showcasing how the "…public fight for Afrikaans at Stellenbosch University reflects the stress of Afrikaner whiteness under conditions of transformation in which the language remains the strongest marker of ethnic identity"[132]. Here, institutional transformation can play a central role in breaching this rhetorical defensiveness or discursive *laager*. In transforming its stance on language, SU has sent an institutionalised message to current and prospective staff and students that showcases not only a willingness to transform, but also a preference for widening accessibility. Has this message been unanimously received? Given that the policy has only been enacted for one academic year at the time of writing, we turn to CRT to try and provide some speculative answers.

In order to provide a nuanced answer, the Language Policy must be further contextualised in terms of some of the other transformative policies enacted by SU. Aside from the aforementioned Language Policy, SU has enacted the "SU institutional plan 2012-2016"[133], the "Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond"[134] and the more recent "Stellenbosch University Institutional Intent and Strategy 2013-2018[135] (which includes SU's "Vision 2030"). This vision reads as follows: "Stellenbosch University is inclusive, innovative, and future focused: a place of discovery and excellence where both staff and students are thought leaders in advancing knowledge in the service of all stakeholders."[136] This future-oriented vision is reinforced with one of its

[132] Ibid., 459.
[133] *Stellenbosch University Institutional Plan 2012-2016,* Stellenbosch University, accessed 5 January 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Documents/Strategic_docs/InstitusionelePlan_e.pdf.
[134] *Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 5 January, 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Documents/Strategic_docs/statengels.pdf.
[135] *Stellenbosch University Institutional Intent and Strategy 2013-2018*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 5 January, 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Documents/Strategic_docs/IP%20english%20website.pdf.
[136] Ibid., 7.

mission statements that seeks to "[m]aintain student-centred and future-oriented learning and teaching that establish a passion for lifelong learning"[137]. This mission, along with the entire vision 2030, fails to mention the importance of establishing historicised context – one of the central tenets of CRT. In fact, there is no mention of "the past" and only one mention of "history" in reference to the "strong history of maintaining student success"[138]. Given SU's historical demography, this statement cannot be universally applied to include the maintenance of black student success. Contemporarily, this may even still be the case, given the current demographic makeup of SU. Thus, from a CRT perspective, SU's Institutional Intent and Strategy raises a red flag. This is significant not only because this document is seen as a guiding policy document, but also because other policies aim to contribute towards its achievement. As showcased by one of the four central aims of the Language Policy:

> "To contribute to achieving SU's Vision 2030, as contained in the University's Institutional Intent and Strategy (2013–2018), so as to enable inclusivity and equitable access to SU for all prospective and current students and staff in pursuit of excellence."[139]

Furthermore, the Language Policy promotes multilingualism by focusing its "institutional commitment on the users of Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa"[140], listed as the three official languages of the Western Cape. However, there exists a blatant discrepancy, in that the policy document itself has only been translated from English to Afrikaans and not isiXhosa. Given that the policy document can be viewed as the starting point for intrapersonal interpretation, let alone institutional change, one must question the integrity of this "commitment" in that the document itself remains interpretively inaccessible.

SU's Admission Policy provides reference to the past in relation to its various measures of redress. It further states: "SU shall also conduct its teaching and

[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid., 15.
[139] Language Policy, pp. 5.2.
[140] Ibid., 2.

research to contribute to the elimination of inequalities and discrimination in the higher education system, including the long-term effects of past inequalities and discrimination."[141] Though there are elements of essentialism within the document through its focus on 'race' and "socio-economic status (SES)", this is qualified in terms of its (legislatively obliged) aims of redress. However, the affirmative action measures employed come with the "specific aim of overcoming the long-term effects of apartheid and racial division"[142]. The explicit reference to 'racial' redress is reaffirmed in the following point, which states: "[i]n implementing affirmative action, the University may differentiate in its targets for Black African, Coloured, Indian and Asian admissions"[143]. Viewed through CRT, this policy, though seeking racial redress, can be criticised for its lack of intersectionality. Though there is no mention of intersectionality within the policy, the "…ultimate aims of the policy are to admit a diverse student body with the potential to succeed and to maintain and promote academic excellence through diversity"[144]. Diversity, in the context of the Admissions Policy, is defined as "factors such as racial classification, gender, sexuality and sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic disadvantage (educational and/or economic disadvantage and first-generation status)."[145] On a strict interpretation, the exclusion of the grammatical conjunction "and/or" within this definition is semantically significant as it showcases that the interrelations of these diversities have not been considered. In their current formulation, these factors read as mutually exclusive (aside from the socio-economic factors). Furthermore, this interpretation ironically extends to inclusivity which is defined as "[n]ot to exclude on the grounds of race, class, origin, gender, sexuality and disability"[146]. Finally, an overarching criticism can be made in terms of the Admissions Policy, in that it is primarily based on meritocracy. This, as found previously in section 2.5, obfuscates structural disadvantage. SU's council establishes enrolment targets ever year, "based on the size (total number of

[141] *Admissions Policy*, Stellenbosch University, pp. 1.4., accessed 20 January, 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/maties/Documents/Admissions%20Policy.docx.
[142] *Ibid*., pp. 6.9.
[143] Ibid., pp. 6.10.
[144] Ibid., 3.
[145] Ibid., pp. 4.1.
[146] Ibid., pp. 4.5.

students) and shape (fields of study and diversity profile) of SU's student body"[147]. Academic performance, irrespective of 'race' and socio-economic status (SES), is given first preference, followed by 'race' and lastly SES. The following process sets targets:

> "As part of the institutional enrolment management process, the Rector's Management Team, in consultation with faculties, annually determines diversity targets in terms of race and SES. Deans, with the support of the divisions of the Registrar, Prospective Students, and Institutional Research and Planning, manage the faculties' enrolment targets."[148]

CRT, with its stance on liberalism, would question the neutrality of this process, especially considering the majority white make-up of the faculty. Whiteness, here, has the power to define diversity, set targets and grant institutional access. A strong tension exists between SU's global pursuit of academic excellence and local diversification efforts. SU attempts to null this tension by listing, as a policy objective: "Offering equal opportunities to prospective students and facilitating redress where individuals or categories of people were or still are disadvantaged due to past unfair discrimination."[149] In other words, SU explicitly ameliorates meritocracy with redress. The former, of course, remains part and parcel of the global tertiary sector as a whole. In this vein, the primacy afforded to "academic performance irrespective of race" is understandable given SU's focus on academic excellence and attempts to progress the institution's national and global academic ranking. An enhanced ranking, however, does not always equate to an enhanced reputation. Locally, given SU's demographic makeup and history, one must question whether this affirmative action is progressive enough to overcome the pervasiveness of meritocratic liberalism. The overarching lack of historicity within the aforementioned guiding policy documents raises further concern.

[147] Ibid., pp. 7.3.1.
[148] Ibid., pp. 7.3.4
[149] Ibid., at pp. 5.5.

In returning to Cabrera's contention, does SU's new Language Policy, for example, contain sufficient proactivity? Or, is the policy predominantly reactive in nature? The policy comes under fire in terms of CRT, as previously mentioned, due to its lack of historicity. That is to say, that the historical context and legacy of Afrikaans is not mentioned. This may in part be due to the heatedness of the *taaldebat* or the power that Afrikaner whiteness still holds within the council. Though these are speculative thoughts, the exclusion of historical context serves to minimise the oppressive stigmas of the language. This is echoed in SU's mission statement, as Banda and Mafofo argue, stating that Afrikaans has been redefined and woven "into the multilingual discourses that have become part of the new South Africa's transformation agenda"[150]. Instead of noting its disempowering history, Afrikaans is contextualised within the policy as follows:

> "Afrikaans has developed an academic repertoire over decades, to which SU has contributed significantly. Applying and enhancing the academic potential of Afrikaans is a means of empowering a large and diverse community in South Africa."[151]

This framing of Afrikaans as empowering is, *prima facie*, well intended, given the relatively large coloured Afrikaans-speaking population within the Western Cape. However, when historically contextualised and intersectionalised, issues arise, most notably in relation to Afrikaans' chequered history with creolisation. As Van der Waal notes:

> "The story of the Afrikaans language has been shaped by a dominant racialised binary based on identitary imaginings of purity versus creoleness. While a process of creolisation was formative of the Afrikaans language, white imaginings and practices of linguistic and racial purity emerged later and became hegemonic. Standard Afrikaans became the core symbol of white Afrikaner ethno-nationalism in the 20th century.

[150] Banda and Mafofo, "Commodification of transformation discourses and post-apartheid institutional identities at three South African universities", 187.
[151] *Language Policy*, 2.

> The linguistic boundary with English was a central aspect of this standard form that led to purifying actions and a consciousness of vulnerability."[152]

Though this stance on *suiwerheid* (purity) of Afrikaans has changed for some (particularly Afrikaans-speaking youth), the language's legacy remains oppressively etched into the bones of many non-Afrikaner South Africans. According to Van der Waal things have changed in post-apartheid South Africa, though "Afrikaans is still associated with competing forms of consciousness: fear for its further demise and death versus celebration of mixture and its 'creole' nature."[153] The lack of proactive institutional action in unpacking the language's legacy and intersectionality not only brings the transformative potential of the policy into question, but also shifts the onus to a more individual level. This task is not only onerous but volatile given the complexity of the language's history and the contradictory ways in which it is racially perceived in terms of its inherent value and (dis)empowering potential.

3.5. Conclusion

Institutional transformation has been showcased as a complex area of interest. Though SU has shown transformative intention by invoking several new and updated policies, a few questions remain as to whether this will translate into practice. Through a detailed contextualisation this chapter has been able to articulate some of the red flags that may hinder prospective institutional transformation. This was buttressed by the utilisation of CRT, so as to offer a theoretical examination in relation to some of said institutional concerns. Of primary concern is the lack of proactivity within the policies in recognising the significant historical and contemporary role that whiteness has played within the institution. The author submits that centring this in future policy, combined with an enhanced intersectional awareness, would prove favourable to the cross-racial acceptance and efficacy of said policy. Finally, without contemplation of the various complexities of whiteness, institutional transformation remains at the behest of its unproductive formulations. CRT, with its emphasis on historical

[152] Van der Waal, "Creolisation and Purity," 458-459.
[153] Ibid., 459.

contextualisation, has aided in identifying and describing this as “defensive whiteness”. Finally, this finding, along with the other findings within this chapter, has served as a springboard to discuss a different level of transformation.

Chapter Four: Relational Transformation

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, we shift our focus away from institutional transformation to a relational viewpoint. How then, does reactive "defensive whiteness" play out in this context? Indeed, this is a question that could have wider reaching application than simply SU, given the suggestion within South African whiteness studies that local whiteness has never had the quality of invisibility that standard global whiteness has. This chapter forms a similar structure to the preceding chapter, in that it is initially contextualised from a national and then local level. This allows for a nuanced examination of relational transformation – how SU has attempted to transform a key feature of its intended "welcoming campus". Though several attempts have been made by SU, a focus is placed on SU's LLL residential initiative. This residential initiative aims to provide a "unique and immersive experiential learning opportunity for participants" which, amongst other aims, seeks to "foster a spirit of participation & engagement" whilst "strengthening the University community" [154]. A recent study on this initiative by Munita Dunn-Coetzee and Magda Fourie-Malherbe, however, showcases that the student participants within the programme contain a self-selection bias – meaning that more "liberal" students seek to partake in the programme.[155] This begs the question – how can transformative policy have a wider impact, reaching more conservative students?

4.2. Historical Context

There has been an overarching focus recently by SU to promote inclusiveness through multilingualism. This institutional focus is undoubtedly important, however according to the most recent South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) it should be seen as a starting point from which to generate further societal interaction:

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[154] *About LLL*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 14 January, 2018, http://www0.sun.ac.za/lllbeta/index.php/about-lll.

[155] Munita Dunn-Coetzee and Magda Fourie-Malherbe, "Promoting Social Change amongst Students in Higher Education: A Reflection on the Listen, Live and Learn Senior Student Housing Initiative at Stellenbosch University," *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* 5, 1, (2017): 63–75, http://dx.doi.org/10.24085/jsaa.v5i1.2483.

> "Progress towards reconciliation in South Africa cannot take place without opportunities for, and willingness to engage in, meaningful connection and interaction between different race groups. More than half of South Africa's population indicated an openness to greater racial integration in the latest SARB 2017 Survey. In general, the spaces where South Africans report having more interaction are also the spaces where they experience the most racism. Most South Africans, however, remain open to interracial interaction in all spaces – private and public – with the main limitations in this regard (other than none) being language and confidence barriers. The latter is of particular importance, given that 'mother tongue' is the most salient primary identity of South Africans. A starting point for further interaction can thus be to promote multilingualism more actively."[156]

Institutionally, there is an added, (at worst) external pressure and (at best) internal desire, to enhance diverse enrolment through various policy documents. However, this thesis contends that there is an imbalance of focus on institutional transformation. These policies, without careful facilitation, risk further polarising SU's campus. A careful, holistic, balance needs to be sought between the enhancements of SU both externally and internally. Naturally these are inter-related processes. Implementing diversity via external enrolment (the town of Stellenbosch, remains an enclaved cradle of whiteness – hence the use of external), without unpacking core aspects of its internal uniformity, will undoubtedly have negative consequences. Even unpacking it in the wrong manner can have similarly negative consequences. Thus, the unpacking of whiteness needs to be carefully framed so as to not re-centre whiteness. Instead, the process needs to have a clear facilitative intent. Aims should include the promotion of inclusiveness through the development of an introspectively intersectionalised understanding of whiteness. The promotion of intersectional introspection should not be seen as and end in and of itself. The primary aim must be to foster a more inclusive campus and thus *success*ful performance of

[156] *South African Reconciliation Barometer Survey 2017*, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 8, accessed 5 January, 2018, http://www.ijr.org.za/home/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/IJR-Barometer-Report-2017-web-1.pdf.

BCI and foreign students. Justification for this logic has been noted by SU: "To SU, academic excellence and relevance, broad transformation, diversity, student success and a welcoming culture are all inextricably linked"[157]. The terms "white" or "whiteness" do not appear once within key transformational policy documents such as "SU Institutional Plan 2012-2016" or the new "Language Policy". This is of grave concern, in that it reiterates the normalised nature of whiteness on campus. In other words, whiteness has not been deemed directly worthy of transformation. Of course, there is the argument that by diversifying demographics (both in terms of students and staff), whiteness is by proxy being transformed. However, without raising complimentary introspective awareness of the value of diversity and whiteness' intersectional (dominant) identity in relation thereto, for instance, may serve to engender relational intolerance. In a multicultural, "Rainbow Nation", such as South Africa one would think that there is a universal understanding of the (positive) value of diversity. However, as the colours of the oft-cited, bordering on clichéd, metaphor begin to fade under the heat of untransformed realities, more and more people are becoming sceptical of the value of reconciliation. As Achille Mbembe poignantly notes:

> "Rainbowism and its most important articles of faith – truth, reconciliation and forgiveness – is fading. Reduced to a totemic commodity figure mostly destined to assuage whites' fears, Nelson Mandela himself is on trial. Some of the key pillars of the 1994 dispensation – a constitutional democracy, a market society, non-racialism – are also under scrutiny. They are now perceived as disabling devices with no animating potency, at least in the eyes of those who are determined to no longer wait. We are past the time of promises. Now is the time to settle accounts."[158]

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[157] *Transformation and Diversity*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 17 January, 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Pages/Diversity.aspx.

[158] Achille Mbembe, *The State of South African political life*, Africaisacountry, accessed 1 February, 2018, http://africasacountry.com/2015/09/achille-mbembe-on-the-state-of-south-african-politics/ cited in Thesnaar, "Decolonisation and renewed racism", 3.

For many young South Africans, the time for talking is over, as some of the recent heated exchanges on campuses throughout the country showcased. Indeed, the demise of the once rose-tinted "Rainbow Nation" rhetoric may, in part, be attributed to the form in which it was nationally received. If it were perceived as a process rather than a reality – "we *are* the Rainbow Nation" – then the value of facilitation processes may have had the potential to remain universal. But, with the "born-free" generation, the harshness of systemic injustice is more pervasive than a purported process constructed in the past. As SU's VC Wim de Villiers acknowledges in an overtly non-racial remark:

> "…the born-frees have arrived on campuses – old enough to think for themselves and see the problems around them, and young and energetic enough to want to do something about it. But neither should we be alarmed. There is no problem with student activism – as long as it does not deteriorate into violence and destruction. We welcome robust discussion because universities are exactly those places where we welcome critical thinking and freedom of expression."[159]

As Derek Hook questions in his utilisation of Steve Biko's "Black Consciousness" to critique whiteness – are the "ideals of a liberal multicultural model of integration", truly compatible in a country that "systematically favours some over others"[160]?

Nevertheless, in terms of relational transformation, without facilitative processes and policies we risk educating "born-free"[161] generations in ideologically isolated institutions. In furthering Woods' contention, this colloquialism must be challenged. However, given the stark levels of inequality (in terms of access to quality education or otherwise), that exists nationally and indeed locally in the Western Cape, one needs to question whether the "born free" rhetoric falls victim to the same criticism applied to the "Rainbow Nation"

[159] '*Transformation at Stellenbosch University: What the future holds' – Rector*.
[160] Hook, "Retrieving Biko: a Black Consciousness critique of whiteness", 23.
[161] Colloquial term for children born during or post-1994, the birth of the newly democratized South Africa.

rhetoric. Namely, due to social and economic inequality, does this statement carry universal truth? With philosophical deconstructions of terms such as *truth* and *freedom* set aside, are the majority of South Africans truly born *free*? When interpreting this statement through the lens of CRT and intersectionality the answer becomes resoundingly negative. Indeed, inequality remains the most divisive societal factor in South Africa according to the most recent SARB survey, with 'race' placing second-most divisive:

> "Since the inception of the survey, 'inequality' has remained the most prominent source of social division in the eyes of ordinary South Africans. Not surprisingly, therefore, respondents feel that on this score the country has made least progress since the political transition of 1994. Inequality is thus both the most divisive and enduring aspect of South African society. Improvement in race relations since 1994 has also been reportedly slow, with 'race' ranking as the second-most divisive aspect of South African society in 2017. These findings, coupled with the prominence of both race and class as primary sources of identity, show that the most divisive aspects of apartheid-era laws – namely racial segregation and socioeconomic divisions – persist as divisions today."[162]

Thus, relational processes must be viewed in context with these overarching societal issues. A challenge, then, is to ensure that expectations are managed in terms of their results. In other words, the relational transformation that has occurred, and the policies and practices implemented to achieve said transformation, must be implemented and analysed holistically. Only one aspect, "whiteness" and its relationship to transformation, can be placed under scrutiny within this mini-dissertation. Though various attempts have been made by SU to foster a more welcoming and inclusive campus[163], I turn to focus on the LLL

[162] *South African Reconciliation Barometer Survey 2017*, 7.
[163] This Includes the Frederick van Zyl Slabbert Institute (FVZS). This institute, through the offering of a wide-array of programmes, "creates various platforms through which students and young people can expand their learning experiences and leadership skills." See *FVZS Institute*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 19 January 2018, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/learning-teaching/student-affairs/student-leadership-and-governance/fvzs.

initiative. Relational transformation is first contextualised further in terms of residences, including their historical centrality within SU.

4.3. Context of SU residences

In a similar vein to the previous section, it is of utmost importance to first contextualise and historicise the residential culture at SU. Several qualitative research projects have been conducted on/at SU residences. Noteworthy for the purposes of this section is Lauren Natalie Brown's thesis[164] on "narratives of belonging amongst students at a historically white university", and Megan Robertson's qualitative study of social cohesion and discrimination in terms of 'race' and gender within residences at SU[165]. Interestingly, Brown found that "residence traditions play an essential role in assisting marginalised students in forming a sense of belonging"[166], however, the use of Afrikaans "continues to be a barrier for marginalised students and prevents them from feeling as if they belong in the residence community"[167]. On footing of this finding, there is suggestion that residences can play a positive transformative role. However, the looming legacy of many of the residences at SU continues to act as a divisive deterrent for many marginalised students. The residences have retained centricity within campus culture for over a decade, as Robertson highlights:

> "It is important to note the impact residences have on student experiences at Stellenbosch University. In many formerly white, Afrikaans universities in South Africa, it is the residences which shapes, informs, and signifies this institutional culture. The fostering of institutional culture and maintenance of residential identity is prevalent in orientation practices and rituals performed by residences throughout the year… students outside of residences (private students) are only half a student.

[164] Lauren Natalie Brown, "NARRATIVES OF BELONGING AMONGST STUDENTS AT A HISTORICALLY WHITE UNIVERSITY", Master's thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2016. http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/100108.
[165] Megan Robertson, "'Real men', 'Proper ladies' and Mixing In-between: A qualitative study of social cohesion and discrimination in terms of race and gender within residences at Stellenbosch University," Master's thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2015, http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/97085.
[166] Brown, 2016, NARRATIVES OF BELONGING AMONGST STUDENTS AT A HISTORICALLY WHITE UNIVERSITY, *iii*.
[167] Ibid.

> Many residence students themselves continue to believe that only once you are in residence do you experience the institutional culture in its entirety."[168]

In 2013, residence placement policies were revised[169], aiming to increase the number of BCI residents. However, persistent practices within many of the residences remained. So much so that a Task Team was established the following year, in October 2014, to inquire into the residences' "unacceptable welcoming practices"[170]. The report highlighted the various practices initiated by SU residences, stating:

> "…[S]ome of these practices certainly are persistent. Even after many successful amendments to programmes and practices, some of these evils resurface. Factors that may cause this persistent recurrence of certain practices include the following: (a) Students experience the University itself as a hierarchical power institution, where everyone needs to know their place and should act accordingly (and, by implication, will be reprimanded if they do not). (b) Students' friends, parents and other family members, alumni and even staff romanticise the experiences and practices to which they were subjected (often under the guise of tradition), which causes some of the unacceptable practices and so-called traditions to be revived.[171]

Robertson argues similarly that the residences have remained hierarchical in nature, and states further that "[t]he institutional culture of SU is still largely unchanged culture reflected in the, language, symbols, sport, choir, festivals,

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[168] Robertson, "'Real men', 'Proper ladies' and Mixing In-between," 13.
[169] *Policy For Placement In Residences, And In Listening, Learning And Living Houses, As Well As Allocation To PSO Wards And Clusters,* Stellenbosch University, accessed 10 January, 2018, http://www0.sun.ac.za/ssg/images/Documents/ENG%20Beleid%202015_Koshuis_PSO_LLL-huise_plasingsbeleid_weergawe%2010%20na%20Raad%2029%20April%202013%20ENGLISH%20(final).pdf.
[170] *Report of the Task Team on the Inquiry into Unacceptable Welcoming Practices*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 10 January 2017, http://www0.sun.ac.za/ssg/images/Documents/Report%20of%20the%20Task%20Team%20on%20the%20Inquiry%20into%20Unacceptable%20Welcoming%20Practices.pdf.
[171] Ibid., 4.

activities and music based upon Afrikaner/European culture"[172] Indeed, transforming such practices is no easy task, as the Task Team concludes:

> "…[W]elcoming, along with abolishing unacceptable welcoming practices, is a complex matter that should be approached systemic- holistically – based on the SA Constitution… A considerable challenge will be to move away from a hierarchical power system or approach, which is extremely persistent, and to replace it in its entirety with a value-driven system that focuses on inclusivity (a hospitable, friendly and dignified campus culture that is welcoming, celebrates diversity, and is regarded as an asset)."[173]

Here, a similar point (as raised in chapter two) is worth making. Policy revision does not automatically ensure desirable change in practice. Similar to the revised Language Policy, the revised Residence Placement Policy cannot, on its own, penetrate the persistence of many campus practices. Furthermore, statistical change (by means of higher BCI placement within residences) should not be conflated with meaningful change. Informal segregation still continues within these residences and on campus generally. For example, in one of the oldest SU residences, Drakenstein, Robertson found that only 9 of the 144 rooms were shared inter-racially.[174] According to the author, "this gives some idea of the type of racial mixing which goes on in the residence"[175]. Brown's findings, despite being cautionary, are considerably more optimistic. She notes:

> "While there are still many barriers to marginalised students, what I found most encouraging in my research was how marginalised students are gradually starting to experience a sense of not only being included, but also seen as significant. While the road ahead may be paved with obstacles, it appears that in some ways, albeit slowly, we are moving forward."[176]

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[172] Robertson, "'Real men', 'Proper ladies' and Mixing In-between," 13.
[173] *Report of the Task Team on the Inquiry into Unacceptable Welcoming Practices,* 5.
[174] Robertson, "'Real men', 'Proper ladies' and Mixing In-between," 5.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid., 86.

This purported goal of "being included" and seen as "significant", should not be read as facetious. Instead, they fall under the desired aim of facilitating a broader level of inclusivity on campus. The call by the aforementioned Task Team in 2014 to establish "a value-driven system that focuses on inclusivity (a hospitable, friendly and dignified campus culture that is welcoming, celebrates diversity, and is regarded as an asset)"[177] was not novel. In fact, inclusivity constitutes a key element of two out of the three aims or "L's" of SU's LLL initiative, which was piloted in 2008[178]. The initiative seeks to fill the aforementioned lacunae located between structural change and social change. As Dunn-Coetzee and Fourie-Malherbe note, this is no easy task, as it "…requires structural change, rethinking roles and relationships, and generally re-engineering student life so that these learning communities are appropriately supported"[179]. I will now elaborate on said aims before discussing the successes and shortcomings of the initiative.

4.4. Aims of the LLL initiative

The LLL initiative is a senior student housing enterprise "with the aim of providing experiential opportunities for students to make contact with 'the other'". The flagship undertaking by SU focuses on immersive experiential learning, with its core aims being to "[e]stablish & enhance graduate attributes, [p]romote diversity in all forms, [f]oster a spirit of participation & engagement, [p]romote discussion of issues [and] [s]trengthen the University community"[180]. Between 2013-2014 the initiative more than doubled in size following the construction of the "LLL village"[181]. The village is centrally located within SU's campus, which may be seen as a deliberate attempt to physically reinforce the centricity of the initiative's standing within the university's broader transformative agenda. Each LLL house is themed, with the "express aim" of facilitating an engagement between the students and their "house mentor (a

[177] *Report of the Task Team on the Inquiry into Unacceptable Welcoming Practices,* 5.
[178] Dunn-Coetzee and Fourie-Malherbe, "Promoting Social Change amongst Students in Higher Education".
[179] Ibid., 65.
[180] *About LLL*.
[181] Ibid.

member of staff or civil society with expertise/interest in the chosen theme)"[182], throughout the year. For more on this, the LLL's website is worth quoting:

> "The theme, which is a complex issue of importance, serves as a common interest or focal point for discussions with each other, the house mentor & invited guests (some of the 2018 house themes were gender equality, nature conservation, technology & innovation, transformative and ethical leadership, education & community empowerment). All house themes are grouped together according to a meta-theme to ensure engagement and collaboration between the LLL village and free-standing houses."[183]

The house mentors or "theme gurus" are members of senior staff – the logic for their inclusion being not only their expertise, but also their ability to catalyse and guide dialogical spaces. In terms of placements within the themed houses, there is an overarching emphasis on diversity, with students differing "in terms of field of study, gender, race, background and nationality"[184]. These combined factors, and the sharing of various intimate spaces, provide participants with the "unique opportunity to form friendships, engage with experts on the theme of their house and to connect with the mentor of their LLL house, and are in the process, confronted with vastly different perspectives"[185], according Dunn-Coetzee and Fourie-Malherbe. These authors in a recent quantitative analysis on the outcomes of the project, point out:

> "The LLL programme aims not only to effect personal change in the participants, but also to empower students to facilitate change for themselves, and on behalf of others. In developing them as actors for social change, the programme also provides a form of leadership empowerment."[186]

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[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Dunn-Coetzee and Fourie-Malherbe, "Promoting Social Change amongst Students in Higher Education," 65.
[185] Ibid., 66.
[186] Ibid.

This "leadership" creation aspect is of central importance to the programme, as it attempts to create a future-orientated focus. As such, "LLL seeks to foster a culture of life-long learning, promoting active citizenship, encouraging change agency and using knowledge and innovation to create sustainable solutions to influence the South African reality and the world at large"[187]. This focus on leadership is in line with the ethos of the FVZS institute. In fact, LLL participants are "encouraged to at least complete one short course through the Frederick van Zyl-Slabbert Institute for Student Leadership as it further provides participants with valuable insights relating to their house themes and aids in their personal development."[188]

Returning to Pillay's perpetually critical model of policy – we turn now to discuss the outcomes of the LLL initiative. In doing so, we separate aim for application, policy from practice. How then has the LLL initiative performed?

4.5. Successes and Shortcomings of the LLL initiative

The recent analysis by Dunn-Coetzee and Fourie-Malherbe provide both positive and negative findings. Both the former and the latter require attention, however the latter carries the most transformative necessity and potential and, as such, will form the focus of the following section.

The study initially opened with a quantitative investigation by means of an electronic survey. This was then followed qualitatively by a set of focus group interviews[189]. The authors anchored their research on one of the purported outcomes of the LLL initiative – "increased levels of interaction among students in a LLL house lead to reduced stereotyping and diminished bias"[190]. Although the study only focuses on one aspect of the project, it still provides ample ground for discussion.

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[187] *About LLL.*
[188] *Assessment Outline for LLL Students*, Stellenbosch University, accessed 12 January, 2018, http://www0.sun.ac.za/lllbeta/index.php/assessment.
[189] Dunn-Coetzee and Fourie-Malherbe, "Promoting Social Change amongst Students in Higher Education."
[190] Ibid., 63.

In terms of positives the study found "…that the LLL experience had a profound effect on the students who participated in the programme, and led to better self-understanding as well as understanding and acceptance of 'the other'."[191] Furthermore, the programme was found to also equip "…students with critical life skills which they would put to good effect in their role as change agents in a healing society."[192] The significance of this is not lost on the researchers, who point out the study's "broader application for other higher education institutions in diverse societies aiming at preparing global citizens for tomorrow"[193]. Finally, the researchers add:

> "[I]t also confirms the value added to holistic student development by the out-of-class experience, but such experiences should be based on sound theoretical perspectives, properly planned, sufficient resources should be made available for their effective implementation, and should be monitored to ascertain that intended outcomes are reached."[194]

In terms of negatives, the study made a single, but crucial, finding. It concludes that the "LLL participants are a self-selecting group", that is to say, students that are generally more open to new experiences and people. The participants also carried more liberalised viewpoints of diversity, adding, "…students who apply for the programme probably already have low levels of prejudice, bias and stereotyping. Therefore their scores would not have changed much from the pre-test to the post-test."[195] This significant finding proves that although there is well-reasoned intent and justified motivation (given the aforementioned positive outcomes), there remains a significant shortcoming in terms of the project's impact. This is most notable in terms of its more "conservative" reach.

[191] Ibid., 73-74.
[192] Ibid., 74.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid., 73.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has showcased the contextual complexities involved in relational transformation at SU. The LLL initiative analysed as it offered insight into SU's attempts to foster relational transformation. Its successes and failures were detailed and naturally, given the scale of the initiative (despite its recent doubling in size), it was never going to be universally available and applicable to campus at large. Furthermore, the fact that it has been a relatively novel "pilot" project is worth taking into account when viewing its shortcomings, and commending when highlighting its successes. The fact still remains, however, that a socially "successful" transformative project contains a self-selection bias. This has significant evaluative impact. Generally, this is partially justifiable given the aforementioned concerns relating to scalability. Specifically, however, why is it that less "conservative" students are not partaking in the project? Remembering, of course, that the majority of the student populace consist of "born-free" South Africans, this finding may be difficult to process for some. Indeed, it is not a simple question – how does one facilitate a transformative project with wide-reaching impact? In order to illuminate some possible explanations, I turn, in the next chapter to the growing field of "Critical Whiteness studies" (CWS).

Chapter Five: Exploring Transformative Shortcomings through Critical Whiteness Studies Literature

5.1. Introduction

Globally, much has been written on "youth engagement"[196], with debates often centering on "youth apathy"[197]. This is a complex topic, given that there are a host of influencing factors. Xenia Chryssochoou and Martyn Barrett note the role played by micro-, meso–, and macro-level influences, stating:

> "Micro-level factors include political interest, efficacy, ideologies, values, and identity; meso-level factors include the family, school, peers, and the neighbourhood; while macro-level factors include political- cultural, economic, legal, and institutional factors."[198]

Their study concludes, "…that young people are far from being apathetic and uninterested in politics, but that they need to find ways to be involved that are meaningful to them"[199]. Nationally, the South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) – which produces annual findings relating to public opinions – found that, "[o]nly four out of ten South Africans trust Parliament to execute its mandate", "[t]wo-thirds of respondents noted that political leaders don't really care about what people like them think, while another 57.9% felt that they have no influence over the actions of politicians" and "[s]ix out of every ten South Africans feel that politics and the system of governance within which it functions is too complex for them to understand"[200]. Locally, the rise of youth movements such as #FeesMustFall and #OpenStellenbosch, seems to support Chryssochoou and Barrett's findings in disproving youth apathy. But can this be extended to include whiteness, considering that the vast majority of #FeesMustFall organisers and activists are black students. Even when white students comprise

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[196] See Pippa Norris, *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
[197] Xenia Chryssochoou and Martyn Barrett, "Civic and political engagement in youth: Findings and prospects," *Zeitschrift fur Psychologie/Journal of Psychology,* 225, 4, (2017): 291-301. https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000315.
[198] Ibid., 293.
[199] Ibid., 297.
[200] *Briefing Paper 3 July 2016*, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 1, accessed 5 January 2018, http://www.ijr.org.za/home/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/IJR-SARB-3-2015-WEB-final.pdf.

a majority of the student body, they remain a minority within activist student movements, at least when it comes to issues of racism. Given that there is a lack of formal research on the 'racial' makeup of the recent student movements, I turn to introduce a brief naturalistic observation made from my time at UCT. This is included to stimulate discussion in the following section, rather than seeking to be of explanatory value.

On the 1st of November, 2017, following UCT Vice Chancellor Dr. Max Price's last minute call for a University assembly, students gathered in the sun on the Jammie steps. Locating the assembly outside on the steps, located in front of the colonially named Jameson Memorial Hall, served as a fitting basis to try and get some things out in the open. But following Dr. Price's opening monologue, it was clear that this space served only to open wounds. Wounds that again served to internally highlight my own unopened and unscarred whiteness.

Then, following Dr. Price's speech, a speaker stood up and demanded that if we were to hear a white member of staff speak, then we deserve to hear a black member of staff's voice. "Let Lushaba speak! Let Lushaba speak!" repeatedly reverberated out of the crowd, until the demand was heard. Dr. Lwazi Lushaba rightfully took to the podium, before delivering a rousing speech. Key messages were delivered, including a call to view the defeat of white settler modernity as a overarching goal. Dr. Lushaba noted that there is not a single black South African professor of political science, which is due to design, not accident. He noted that the #FeesMustFall struggle was not about money, but about changing value systems within our education system; the task of thinking had been rendered exclusive to whiteness. Whiteness provokes, and then expects a response. It expects to be heard – for blackness to have the decency to listen. This is not a poor struggle, this is a black struggle. The speech finished with a call to make the goal of the movement to changing the value of the education system to produce the rehumanisation of black people – "the time will come when we are not at the whim of white sentiment", "white people must know this". How do I, as a white, male, Afrikaans speaking, middle class student, begin unpacking, and responding to this?

Before long, out of the crowd appeared a white male speaker, similar enough age to me, rearing to respond. After initially admitting that he did not know "the professor", Dr. Lushaba's name, the student responded, "it is unfair of you to say that all white people are rich and all black people are poor, my mother was a single mother who worked extremely hard, and the only reason I am on campus is due to her and financial aid". Heads turned, jeers rang throughout the crowd, and the man returned to his seat to a hostile set of surrounding eyes. What was it that this answer encapsulated? What was missed in his response, seemingly reasonable and perhaps even well intentioned? Seemingly, he, as a token of (defensive) whiteness, was on a different page to the black voices in front of him highlighting systemic exclusion and injustices. But the fact remains, he felt motivated and just in standing up to point out his individualised and internalised 'struggle'. Surely he was not alone in feeling this, but what motivated him to mobilise his whiteness? More importantly, can this motivation be transformed to serve positive engagement and understanding, rather than to engender further alienation?

To return to the assembly, the purpose was to address the proposed 8-10% increase on university fees. The following day, campus was disrupted, with students arrested and excrement was dumped throughout campus. Meanwhile, Stellenbosch University had already announced its planned increase of 8% increased fees back on October 11, joining North-West University in doing so. This announcement came before the release of the Fees Commission Report. What then, does this say about the institutional culture at Stellenbosch University, whereby it is able to "prematurely and provocatively"[201] institute such proceedings? How is this peacefully possible given the pain that is on show UCT's campus 25km away?

[201] As per the The Higher Education Transformation Network (HETN), see James de Villiers, "Stellenbosch University SRC rejects proposed 8% fee increase," News24, 20 October, 2017, https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/stellenbosch-university-src-rejects-proposed-8-fee-increase-20171020 (accessed 10 January 2018).

What motivated that white man at UCT to speak, and for me to remain silent? Was it that I was intimidated, overwhelmed or even scared by the setting? Or did I remain silent, as I was aware of the complexity of the issues before me? Perhaps, the safest route was to remain neutral in this heated space. But this neutrality sits on the precipice of being conflated with apathy or indifference. Perhaps this is one of life's ultimate privileges – the ability to remain indifferent in times of injustice. As Elie Weisel in his famous speech on "the perils of indifference" notes, "Indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor – never its victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feels forgotten"[202]. But is remaining neutral, the same as being indifferent? Can one be reasoned in employing nuanced neutrality in times of systematic injustice? CRT scholars would argue strongly against this, considering its rejection of 'race'-neutrality. As Joel Modiri points out: "In the end, the result will always be the same: neutrality always normalises the status quo, and in situations where material inequality suffered by blacks is the status quo, neutrality can have disastrous racist consequences."[203] As will be discussed below, however, it is important to provide nuance when examining whiteness so as to avoid essentialism. Not all white students at SU, for instance, invoke neutral or indifferent standpoints.

In Stellenbosch, have things shifted past the point of non-neutral return? In other words, would the fiery engagements on the Language Policy, for example, seem to indicate polarised difference, rather than indifference? In saying that, however, it must be noted that many of the most prominent *taalstryders*[204] involved in the *taaldebat* are not current SU students. Rather, the composition consisted mainly of older white elite academics[205]. Furthermore, it must be reiterated that language transformation is only one aspect of SU's broader transformatory project. Having said that, Afrikaans-speaking students, often

[202] See Zat Rana, "The Perils of Indifference," *Medium*, May 19, 2017, https://medium.com/personal-growth/the-perils-of-indifference-74c808ec2f0a, (accessed 10 January, 2018).
[203] Modiri, "The Colour Of Law, Power And Knowledge," 416.
[204] Afrikaans for "language fighter/defender" (own translation).
[205] Kriel, "The Adam Tas student association and the tension between Afrikaans identity and transformation at Stellenbosch University," 64.

remain (publicly) neutral in transformative dialogue[206]. Jana Barnard discusses this in her SU orientated thesis on "Racial Discourse among White Afrikaans-speaking Youth". She notes that white students often sparsely attend discussion opportunities, similar to the UCT convocation described above:

> "The average white Afrikaans-speaking student's apparent unawareness or ignorance of these ongoing politics can, however, not be completely divorced from the overall hesitation with which involvement with such issues is met, with said students seeming to prefer to share their grievances privately among each other in stead [sic.] of exposing their objections to public scrutiny. What they experience personally, namely fear of loss of heritage, conflicts with what is expected of them publicly, namely to adapt to new circumstances and thereby contribute to overall South African harmony."[207]

Barnard continues by noting how this supposed contradiction is being negotiated, purportedly on behalf of students, by organisations such as the Adam Tas student association. However, more recent research by Kriel brings the organisation's mandate into question:

> "The association's motto of 'Transformation through Afrikaans' is indicative of Adam Tas's strong association with only one language, Afrikaans. This emphasis on Afrikaans is thus contradictory to its claim of supporting the inclusion and integration of all diverse 'racial' categories. Despite Adam Tas's claim that it is in agreement with university management regarding SU being in need of transformation, the vision of this association is also contradictory to one of the goals of university

[206] Afrikaans-speaking white students were referred to as "fanatically neutral" by a member of the Adam Tas organization, cited in Barnard, "Racial Discourse among White Afrikaans-speaking Youth," 42.
[207] Ibid.

management: transforming Stellenbosch University into a non-ethnic university."[208]

Irrespective of its mandate, the mere presence of the Adam Tas student association showcases that there exists a belief that Afrikaans-speaking student rights are not being respected by SU's transformative agenda. As Kriel points out, however, the organisation "…is still viewed by many non-white, non-Afrikaans-speakers at SU as a white, Afrikaner association with a right-wing agenda, despite its numerous efforts to rid the association of this exclusive image"[209]. This sizeable gap between the association's intended practice and resulting perception is certainly noteworthy. However, it also serves to highlight the often-polarising products of transformative practice. But, as Barnard points out, a focus on these peripheries often ignores the (silent) majority of students, who "…tend to refrain from involvement with loaded issues such as transformation and language due to the racial connotations"[210] I now turn to Critical Whiteness Studies to offer nuance on this supposed silence, with the hope of potentially offering a means of "unloading" said issues. I will first revisit Green, Sonn and Matsebula's "'lens' of whiteness" before turning to more contemporary global and local literature.

5.1.1. A "lens" of whiteness

In Green, Sonn and Matsebula's seminal review of the concept of whiteness as applied to Australia and South Africa, the authors essentially posit whiteness as a means of deconstructing 'race' relations. The authors highlight how there are complex forces at play within whiteness that complicate the broad and oft-cited definition ascribed by Frankenberg[211] to whiteness. The complexities of these various forces cannot be exhaustively deciphered and described within this

[208] Kriel, "The Adam Tas student association and the tension between Afrikaans identity and transformation at Stellenbosch University," *iii-iv*.
[209] Ibid., *iv.*
[210] Barnard, "Racial Discourse among White Afrikaans-speaking Youth," 47.
[211] Defined in chapter two as "…the production and reproduction of dominance rather than subordination, normativity rather than marginality, and privilege rather than disadvantage". In Frankenberg, "White women, race matters," Green, Sonn, and Matsebula, "Reviewing whiteness," 390.

thesis. Instead, some of the most pertinent forces as elicited by recent literature are described further below. What is worth noting from Green, Sonn and Matsebula's findings is the ways in which whiteness reproduces itself in three ways: "Through knowledge and history construction, national identity and belonging, and anti-racism practice"[212]. These are simplified, here, for the sake of clarity, as relating to *knowledge*, *identity* and *practice*. When applied to SU and other university campuses, these three elements of whiteness have particular relevance and resonance. Here, one could argue that the recent student protests on campuses around the country are actively seeking to dismantle these three reproductive forces, by demanding decolonisation of and increased access to curricula (*knowledge*) and campuses (*identity*). Furthermore, by viewing protest as a means of attempting to disrupt, the movement(s) brought into question the efficacy of the previous and existing university (transformative) *practice.* The protests, however, were met with varying levels of support nationally. Seemingly, there was a shift in support once things become "violent" or "destructive", with notable public discourse occurring following the burning of paintings on UCT's upper campus in early 2016[213]. Here, we see a fine line between what some may deem disruptive and others destructive. Furthermore, the "language of violence" is of particular interest to Robin DiAngelo, who argues that whiteness invokes a narrow definition of violence as "physical" so as to "pervert the actual direction of danger that exists between whites and others"[214]. Often, as has been showcased by the recent student movements, the indirect forms of violence are being highlighted by black voices. As has been ethnographically observed above, however, whiteness often struggles to productively engage with this form of pain. CRT and CWS scholars would argue, here, that this is due to the pervasive power of whiteness by means of structural and cultural dominance. In other words, whiteness has historically imposed indirect violence, rather than experienced it. I now turn to CWS literature, to try

[212] Ibid.
[213] For a statement from Associate Professor Fritha Langerman, director of the Michaelis School of Fine Art, "condemning the destruction of art and the loss of collective histories", see *On the destruction of art and the loss of collective histories*, UCT, 18 February, 2016, https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2016-02-18-on-the-destruction-of-art-and-the-loss-of-collective-histories (accessed 1 February 2018).
[214] DiAngelo, "White fragility", 65.

and delve deeper into why there is this seeming disconnect. These concepts are not intended as an exhaustive explanation of the various nuances of whiteness or CWS, but rather are intended as a framework to better understand some of the dynamics at play at SU.

5.2. White fatigue

For Joseph Flynn, the challenge relates to developing an understanding of racism that moves past individualised connotations (relating to prejudice and discrimination), to a more systemic understanding[215]. Flynn refers to this as "white fatigue"[216]. Perhaps this understanding is what was missed in the young white student's response at the UCT convocation. Having said that, however, this response, and indeed any response ('race'-based or otherwise) should be viewed as part of a constellation of potential responses. A single response cannot be used as indicative of group sentiment. One could argue that those that speak out in public, given the social risks involved (such as stigmatisation, misrepresentation, failure etc.), tend to feel strongly about the given issue being discussed. Often, it is the less overt responses that best represent the thoughts of many. In less public, seemingly 'safer' spaces, these covert currents often erupt. Cornel Verwey and Micheal Quayle refer to this as "backstage" talk; "talk that is usually reserved for fellow whites or Afrikaners"[217]. Verwey and Quayle's findings indicate a distinction between public and private constructions of (Afrikaner) identity. They held:

> "While the participants rejected many stereotypes of Afrikaner identity, they simultaneously recycled key discourses underlying apartheid ideology, particularly discourses of black incompetence and whites under

[215] Flynn, "White Fatigue."
[216] This concept should not be conflated with "racial battle fatigue", which addresses "…the physiological and psychological strain exacted on racially marginalized groups and the amount of energy lost dedicated to coping with racial microaggressions and racism." William A. Smith, Walter R. Allen and Lynette L. Danley, "'Assume the Position... You Fit the Description': Psychosocial Experiences and Racial Battle Fatigue Among African American Male College Student," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 51, 4, (2007): 555, http://abs.sagepub.com/content/51/4/551.
[217] Verwey and Quayle, "Whiteness, Racism, And Afrikaner Identity In Post-Apartheid South Africa."

threat."[218]

Most of the participants in that study, however, were over the age of 30, with only one student included. The findings, nonetheless, seem to support some of Flynn's (student focussed) conclusion(s) on *white fatigue.* That is to say, that many of the participants understood the moral imperative of anti-racism (apartheid was almost universally condemned[219]), but still resurrected much of the apartheid ideology. One could argue here that this seems to indicate a lack of racial (identity) awareness, which serves to reinforce structural racism. Flynn places this lack of awareness at the centre of his novel perspective on whiteness and critical race pedagogy.

Flynn, much like this thesis, studies racism "critically" in describing the phenomenon *White fatigue.* Put simply:

> "White fatigue attempts to name the dynamic of White students who intuitively understand or recognize the moral imperative of antiracism (primarily viewed as individual racism); however, they are not yet situated to fully understand the complexity of racism and how it functions as an institutional and systemic phenomenon. Due to the complexity required of critical (as compared to simplistic) studies of racism, those who are fatigued claim to be "tired of talking about" racism, despite the intuitive understanding that racism is morally wrong. This phenomenon is further aggravated by students' desire to not be judged as racist."[220]

Referring back to Barnard's finding – that there exists a contradiction within SU's Afrikaans-speaking populace between "personal" experiences and "public" expectations – one could apply Verwey and Quayle's findings, and Flynn's concept of *White fatigue*, to highlight how students are aware of the moral imperative of transformation or anti-racism (public), but are struggling to process their positionality in relation thereto (personal). Ideally, open, inviting,

[218] Ibid., 551.
[219] Ibid., 568.
[220] Flynn, "White Fatigue," 115.

national engagement on 'race' or other socially stigmatic themes should be occurring, given the restorative impetus placed on dialogue during South Africa's transition. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) attempted to provide these restorative foundations, but has been criticised for not having included systemic social violations in its focus. As Melissa Steyn puts it: "[t]he hearings of the Commission did not reveal how ordinary people experienced the quotidian life of apartheid; how they perpetuated, enjoyed, suffered and resisted the system"[221]. Seemingly, the TRC, and other restorative aspects of transitional justice, have been disparately respected and interpreted by segments of South African society[222]. As the most recent SARB highlights:

> "In comparison to other race groups, white South Africans indicate higher levels of denial of past injustices and lower levels of support for redress. …Ignorance and forgetting serve to shield white South Africans from being aware of such injustices and to ensure that racial privilege continues without internal questioning. These factors, coupled with perceived group political 'powerlessness'…creates an environment in which it is very difficult to find solutions to engage constructively in findings ways forward."[223]

These national challenges are often felt at a local level, such as at SU. Christoffel Thesnaar, a theologian from SU, in discussing the recent student protests and their impact on reconciliation, notes, for instance:

> "South Africans have become all too familiar with the recent service delivery protests by mainly poor black citizens. Most of these protests have been directed at local government as the level of disillusionment,

[221] Steyn, "The ignorance contract", 9.
[222] Gunnar Theissen and Brandon Hamber, "A State of Denial: White South Africans' attitudes to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission," *Indicator South Africa*, 15, 1, (1998): 8-12, http://hdl.handle.net/10520/AJA0259188X_240.
[223] *South African Reconciliation Barometer Survey 2017*, 26

> frustration and disappointment regarding un-kept promises [by the TRC for example]…has at times culminated in violence"[224]

Facilitators (or SU staff) are tasked with fostering a space in which personal experiences, primarily discussed in private, are willingly and publically illuminated. Having said that, however, other academics have suggested alternative interpretations, such as Melissa Steyn and Don Foster, who hold that whiteness in South Africa has engaged in "white talk"[225]. In a nutshell, this is the suggestion that whiteness invokes discursive strategies in order to positively present itself, whilst remaining resistant towards transformation. Derek Hook further examines this, and other forms of discursive strategies invoked by whiteness, through the lens of Black Consciousness. In building upon Sara Ahmed's "seminal" criticisms of whiteness[226] (namely its non-performativity relating to anti-racism) Hook refers to these speech-acts as "white declarations", stating, in basic terms:

> "…I admit to my racism so as to exculpate myself from my racism, to prove that I am essentially a well-intentioned non-racist because, after all, proper racists do not know that they are racists. Something is thus performed – a confession, an apology, an admission – but it is not fully translated into an action, it remains stuck at the level of speech-act, this is what Ahmed has in mind with the notion of the non-performativity of anti-racism… One acknowledges the social asymmetries that one has benefited from (assuming of course that one is a beneficiary), thus alleviating a portion of guilt, whilst continuing to enjoy these privileges indeed, consolidating them at a higher level by virtue of one's awareness, one's self-reflexive stance."[227]

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[224] Thesnaar, "Decolonisation and renewed racism," 1.
[225] Steyn and Foster, "Repertoires for talking white."
[226] Sara Ahmed, "Declarations of Whiteness: The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism," *Borderlands*, 3, 2, (2004): 1-12, http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol3no2_2004/ ahmed_declarations.htm.
[227] Hook, "Retrieving Biko," 26-27.

Being on the receiving end of this non-performativity can be deeply frustrating, as Archbishop Makgoba notes: "For decades, the promises of equality haven't been kept. The promise of equality, of opportunity has failed to be delivered or achieved. We can't just feel and preach. We want more than just talk – we want action."[228] Often, these frustrations can come to a head through protest action or otherwise – as showcased by the recent student movements[229]. How then, does whiteness position itself in relation to this? Are these speech-acts deliberately or ignorantly non-performative? Melissa Steyn argues that elements of both the former and the latter are at play within whiteness, generally.

5.2.1 White Ignorance

Steyn refers to this as "The Ignorance Contract" – "the tacit agreement to entertain ignorance" that "lies at the heart of a society structured in racial hierarchy."[230]. The author views 'race' as "one of the organizing principles of inequality in society"[231], in noting how whiteness has been characterized:

> "…[a]s a structurally privileged positionality (un)informed by ignorance/blindnesses – taking for granted unearned entitlements that come at the expense of racialized others, and generally lacking insight into the normalized racial order that shapes life opportunities and conditions imperceptibly around the comfort, convenience and advancement of whites"[232]

This characterisation of whiteness must be borne in mind when exploring Flynn's concept of *White Fatigue*. In other words, instead of viewing whiteness as passive in its lack of (systemic) understanding of 'race' and racism (due to complexity of content or otherwise), one must consider the active agency

[228] Remarks by Thabo Makgoba, cited in Thesnaar, "Decolonisation and renewed racism", 1.
[229] It must be noted that other movements aside from the #FeesMustFall have occurred, such as "#ReformPukke, #TuksUprising, #OpenStellies, #RhodesMustFall, #SteynMustFall, #PatriarchyMustFall, #TheTransCollective, #BlackStudentsStokvel, and #BlackStudentsMovement", as highlighted in Thierry Luescher, "Towards an intellectual engagement with the #studentmovements in South Africa," *Politikon*, 43, 1, (2016): 145, https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2016.1155138.
[230] Steyn, "The ignorance contract", 11.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Ibid.

invoked by whiteness in purportedly setting the terms of the *ignorance contract*[233]. As Steyn reiterates in her understanding of ignorance:

> "Unlike the conventional theorization of ignorance that regards ignorance as a matter of faulty individual cognition, or a collective absence of yet-to-be-acquired knowledge, ignorance is understood as a social achievement with strategic value."[234]

Aside from the promulgation of a "non-conventional" theorisation of ignorance, Steyn's findings serve to highlight two things. The first is to showcase the impact that ignorance has had in sustaining a "society predicated on non–relationality"[235]; "[i]gnorance thus provides an important 'insulating medium' for the reproduction of a hierarchical racial order, both a consequence and cause of non-relationality, of living past each other"[236]. This, indirectly, emphasises points made in the preceding section relating to the importance of establishing relational transformation. In flipping Steyn's statement, one could argue that by transforming non-relationality, one can in turn reduce relational ignorance. Furthermore, this increase in relational transformation and reduction in ignorance can become both positively and mutually reinforcing – as cause and consequence. Finally, Steyn's contributions to agnotology (the study of ignorance), are as timely as they are incisive, given recent the rise of "post-truth"[237] politics. With the rise of "fake news" and the polarising potential of social media (discussed further below), *ignorance*, and its relationship with whiteness, must retain pertinence for prospective transformative practice and policy.

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[233] Worth pointing out that Steyn suggests that ignorance is not distinct to whiteness: "Both white and black South Africans produced epistemologies of ignorance, although the terms of the contract were set by white society as the group with the dominant power." Ibid., 8.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid., 21.
[236] Ibid.
[237] This term exploded into public discourse in 2016, resulting in Oxford Dictionaries labeling it the "word of the year" for that same year. Post-truth, in a nutshell, is the favouring of feelings over facts. See *Word of the Year 2016 is…,* Oxford Dictionaries, accessed 30 January, 2018, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016.

The second thing that Steyn's submissions highlight is the importance of questioning the normative nature of whiteness (discussed further in section 5.4.1.) For the purpose of this section, this will be achieved by allowing nuance in studying epistemologies of whiteness. Thus, *White Fatigue* will not be viewed in isolation, but rather as part of a range of phenomena and responses related to 'race' and racism. Other concepts, according to Flynn, which are related to "but distinct from" *White fatigue*, are: *White resistance, White guilt* and *White fragility*[238]. I will now turn to describe each of these concepts and how they apply to SU. Again, these concepts are not intended as an exhaustive explanation of the various nuances of whiteness or CWS, but rather are intended as a framework to better understand some of the dynamics at play at SU.

5.3. White resistance

This concept relates to the more extreme ends of whiteness, as discussed in the introduction of this chapter. Meaning, that *White resistance* is a "flat-out rejection of the principles of anti-racism altogether"[239]. This can have a severe impact on potential transformative efforts, as Diane Goodman explains:

> "When people are *resistant*, they are unable to seriously engage with the material. They *refuse* to consider alternative perspectives that challenge the dominant ideology that maintains the status quo. They resist information or experiences that may cause them to question their worldview. *They may dismiss the idea that oppression or systemic inequalities are real*. … It is *irrational, an automatic reaction rather than a considered choice* [emphasis added]."[240]

There is a tendency, when viewing complex transformative change, to polarise transformative subjects. In other words, to say that there are two camps in times of transformation – those that want transformation and those that don't. The latter, in using Goodman's terminology, would be referred to as *resistant*. In the

[238] Flynn, "White Fatigue," 116.
[239] Ibid., 117.
[240] Goodman, *Promoting diversity and social justice,* 51, cited in Flynn, "White Fatigue," 117.

case of SU, when talking about campus culture, it is alluring to place the majority of white (in particular Afrikaner) students into this category. Taking it one step further, one could even use *white resistance* as justification for the lack of transformation (demographically or otherwise) that has occurred at SU. There are undoubtedly *resistant* staff and students on campus, as indicated by the promulgation of the Nazi-inspired posters. Arguing otherwise would flirt with the tenets of racial denialism. Indeed, the institutional culture, as indicated in the preceding sections, contains imbedded systems of whiteness, which would on foot of a social constructivist perspective on identity formation seemingly influence individual student perceptions and identities, perhaps creating polarisation, and furthering *resistance*. This influence is not necessarily exclusive to SU, and can occur in other locales. Van der Westhuizen, argues, for instance, that a phenomenon of "enclave nationalism" is occurring within Afrikaner communities. She argues,

> "Afrikaner nationalism's territorial claims to a nation state were defeated, neo-nationalist remnants reclaim a purchase on white Afrikaans identities, albeit in shrunken territories. …These dynamics produce a privatised micro-apartheid in sites ranging from homes, to commercial and religious enterprises, to suburbs. Virtual white spaces in the form of Afrikaans media products serve as extensions of these whitened locales."[241]

Here, Van der Westhuizen raises several important points. Namely, the increase of "enclaves", and the role the media has in reinforcing or extending these whitened identities or "locales". Van der Westhuizen's study, however, does not contain reference to youth in particular. There is also a lack of discussion on intergenerational influences[242] and, although there is mentioning of the influencing role of the media, there is no reference to social media. Social media has played a pivotal role on SU's campus in recent years. The #FeesMustFall movement, raised and promulgated via social media, garnered national

[241] Van der Westhuizen, "Afrikaners in post-apartheid South Africa," 1.
[242] See Jansen, *Knowledge in the Blood*.

attention, making its way into mainstream news outlets. At SU, the similarly organised #OpenStellenbosch movement used social media as an organisational and informational outlet. Aside from its mobilisation potential, social media has also impacted SU's campus culture due to its capacity to foster virality.

5.3.1. #Racism

Several 'race' and racism related incidents, relating specifically to SU, have gone viral recently. Some of these have been mentioned above, such as the "hotnot" incident and the "Nazi poster" incident. Furthermore, virality served not only to highlight individual incidents, but also sustained systematic injustices experienced on campus through the documentary "Luister" in 2015. Though the extensive analysis of these incidents and the commentary they produced is not the purpose of this paper, they, and their comment sections, provide a snapshot into the often-polarising discourse relating to 'race' and racism in South Africa.

It also serves to showcase how the sharing of moralised content is shaped by emotion (such as outrage). This supports the recent findings made by researchers from New York University, who observed:

> "…[T]hat the presence of moral-emotional words in messages increased their diffusion by a factor of 20% for each additional word. Furthermore, we found that moral contagion was bounded by group membership; moral-emotional language increased diffusion more strongly within liberal and conservative networks, and less between them."[243]

This finding could have a significant impact on how youth engagement is viewed. Namely, in seeking to address how one facilitates an inclusive campus environment during the rise of various forms of increasingly *un*social media[244].

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[243] William J. Brady et al., "Emotion shapes the diffusion of moralized content in social networks." *PNAS*, 114, 28, (2017): 7313–7318. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1618923114.

[244] For discussion see Anthony D'Ambrosio, "Unsocial Media: Everyone is Talking, but Nobody is Saying a Word," *Huffington Post*, 23 November, 2015, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/anthonydambrosio/unsocial-media-everyone-i_b_8622118.html (accessed 10 December 2017). For empirical analysis see Vincent Miller, "Phatic culture and the status quo: Reconsidering the purpose of social media activism," *Convergence: The International Journal of*

In studying virality and moral outrage, Molly Crocket points out that "[e]xpressing latter can be costly. Offline, moralistic punishment carries a risk of retaliation. But online social networks limit this risk. They enable people to sort themselves into echo chambers with sympathetic audiences"[245]. Crocket's reasoning falls in line with Van der Westhuizen's "enclave nationalism" argument, that is to say, that people (in this case Afrikaners) are (deliberately) living increasingly in isolated environments. Can the same deliberateness be extended to social media, in terms of its polarising potential? As a user, one can dictate, with the ease of a few clicks, the content and people surrounding one's profile – or "online identity". This facilitates a self-serving environment that is free from challenge. This, arguably, is the antithesis of what a University campus should be. But, given the lack of demographic diversity on SU's campus, can it be said that student narratives (radicalised or otherwise) are truly and meaningfully being challenged? The LLL initiative's creation and implementation, as a space for diverse interaction, is an explicit recognition by SU management that this is an issue on campus. However, as evidenced by the initiative's self-selecting bias, this interactive space is limited in its reach. Has 'race' and racism become negatively stigmatised to a point where (white) students are unwilling to engage – for fear of viral reprimand or otherwise? One could undoubtedly view this unwillingness as a form of *white resistance*. However, is this pedagogically productive? Flynn argues in the negative, in noting that although there are undoubtedly students who hold *resistant* beliefs, this should not be seen as broadly indicative of a student populace:

> "Flatly labelling…students as resistant draws a conceptual line in the sand that challenges their sense of morality and forces them into a conceptual and rhetorical corner. Rather than being an empowering discourse, antiracism and multiculturalism can become a marginalizing discourse for these students. That conceptual dissonance can foster frustration and

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Research into New Media Technologies, 23, 3, (2017): 251–269, https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856515592512.

[245] Molly J. Crockett, "Moral outrage in the digital age," *Nature Human Behaviour*, 1, (2017): 769–771, https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-017-0213-3.

> resignation, making antiracist work that much more complicated—and uniniviting"[246]

For a marginalised reader, this statement may, ironically cause similar levels of "frustration". Why, in the first place, does whiteness, or "white work" need to be "inviting" before it is deemed engagement worthy? One argument, already briefly mentioned, is the negative stigma related to 'race' work. Another is the lack of incentivisation to do so. The perceived risk, in this case, often outweighs the reward, so to speak. This is particularly the case when the reward is ambiguously received. Many Afrikaners in Stellenbosch and at SU, as evidenced by the fiery *taaldebat*, believe that the "reward" – transformative justice – is coming at the expense of their language rights and, by proxy, their culture and identity. Thus, this becomes, in part, a framing issue. Further research into the ways in which a collective reframing of the value of transformation can be achieved would be required. The recent judgement by CJ Mogoeng certainly provides the building blocks to do so. At the risk of falling victim to reductionist reasoning, one must qualify the previous passage by keeping the various aforementioned preservation strategies employed by whiteness. More of these are discussed below.

5.4. White Fragility

Even when whiteness engages within anti-racist work it often does so in an unproductive fashion, according to Robin DiAngelo, DiAngelo refers to this concept as "white fragility", which is defined as:

> "A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress- inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium."[247]

[246] Flynn, "White Fatigue," 116.
[247] DiAngelo, "White fragility," 54.

DiAngelo conceptualises *white fragility* as a direct product of racial insulation, noting that "segregation occurs on multiple levels, including representational and informational"[248]. Though there are other factors that influence *white fragility* according to DiAngelo (written in a US context), this aspect is the most directly applicable in relation to Stellenbosch. On the influence of segregation on whiteness, the author is worth citing at length:

> "Because whites live primarily segregated lives in a white-dominated society, they receive little or no authentic information about racism and are thus unprepared to think about it critically or with complexity. Growing up in segregated environments (schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, media images and historical perspectives), white interests and perspectives are almost always central. …Further, white people are taught not to feel any loss over the absence of people of color in their lives and in fact, this absence is what defines their schools and neighborhoods as "good;" whites come to understand that a "good school" or "good neighborhood" is coded language for "white". …The quality of white space being in large part measured via the absence of people of color (and Blacks in particular) is a profound message indeed, one that is deeply internalized and reinforced daily through normalized discourses about good schools and neighborhoods. This dynamic of gain rather than loss via racial segregation may be the most profound aspect of white racial socialization of all. Yet, while discourses about what makes a space good are tacitly understood as racially coded, this coding is explicitly denied by whites."[249]

This is a crucial observation by DiAngelo – namely in relation to the normative power of whiteness. The influence that segregation has on maintaining said normativity, is overtly applicable to South Africa and Stellenbosch. The legacy of Apartheid's formal segregation policies remains pertinent in contemporary

[248] Ibid., 58.
[249] Ibid., 58-59.

South Africa. Stellenbosch, and SU, are no exception to this; however, formal policies have been replaced with informal structures. The normative power of whiteness, as suggested, plays a pivotal role in buttressing these structures.

5.4.1 Normative Whiteness

The normative power of whiteness is a core feature of whiteness according to global CWS literature. Indeed, CWS, much like CRT, takes the normative power of whiteness as a given, and instead of attempting to prove its existence, it seeks to illuminate the ways in which it manifests. That being said, the "standard" normative power of global whiteness must be applied to South African whiteness with qualification. As Melissa Steyn notes:

> "…[E]ven in apartheid South Africa, whiteness never had the quality of invisibility that is implied in the 'standard' whiteness literature, which is made possible by the comfort of being comfortably in the majority, demographically, economically, and politically. The demographic fact of white people being a small minority has made whiteness more visible in this context, even to those most centred by its privilege."[250]

In SU, with whiteness still in the demographic majority, one could argue that the normativity of whiteness remains, in part, less visible to whiteness itself. On foot of this finding, SU becomes somewhat of a misnomer to Steyn's statement. Nonetheless, when placed in a national context, Steyn's findings complicate this assumption, showcasing how whiteness, as a social identity in in South Africa contains several idiosyncratic divergences from that "described in other heartlands of whiteness":

> "The power relations that supported the old social identities have been profoundly troubled. White South Africans cannot assume the same privileges, with such ease, when state power is overtly committed to breaking down racial privilege — though…they certainly are trying to

[250] Steyn, "As the postcolonial moment deepens," 421-422.

> prolong its shelf life. The relatively disempowered relationship to the state and to political power positions whiteness in South Africa differently from whiteness in any of the other places that are theorising whiteness. If all racism has to do with sapping power from blackness, whiteness here has to contend with blacks who have power politically, demographically, and increasingly, culturally, and still on a small scale, economically."[251]

Within this divergence, a further complicating difference must be added, by questioning whether this statement can extend to Stellenbosch and SU. In terms of the former, informal spatial segregation still exists with a vast disparity of access to services permeating between the black and white populations within the town. With regards to the latter, black staff and students remain vastly outnumbered, which, in turn, brings into question their cultural and political power. In other words, although South African whiteness diverges from "standard" global whiteness literature due to its demographically minoritised position, this cannot explicitly extend to SU. Thus, as a site where whiteness exerts demographic dominance, SU offers an interesting site for exploring whiteness. Particularly, when whiteness is contextualised in relation to white Afrikaans-speaking students, who no longer constitute the majority of students on campus[252]. This is a significant finding, considering that ten years ago, Afrikaans-speaking students constituted almost 58.4% of the student populace. This demographic decline has been invoked as justification by *taalstryders* in opposing the various alterations to language policies invoked by SU over the past decade. A counter argument could be invoked, to showcase that various transformative policies, such as the aforementioned language policies, have been successful in providing greater access to non-Afrikaans speaking students. Nonetheless, white Afrikaans-speaking students, are placed in a position of flux as they sit with both a minoritised and majoritised white identity. This is

[251] Ibid., 422.

[252] As of 2016, 41.6% of students listed Afrikaans as their home language. This figure may be distorted in relation to whiteness, considering that many "coloured" students list Afrikaans as their home language. This statistic has seen a steady decline over the past few years, sitting at 58.4% in 2007. See *Statistical Profile*.

indicative of a broader tension within Afrikaner identity, as Christi van der Westhuizen explains in her recently published book examining the positionality of white Afrikaans women in post-Apartheid South Africa. Speaking of Afrikaner identity generally:

> "Afrikaner identity suffers from a double-marked whiteness: first occupying a suspect position of lesser whiteness in relation to dominant Anglo whiteness and, second, being judged by global whiteness as morally defective because of the Afrikaner 'invention' of apartheid, the material advantage that Afrikaners drew from that system and the great human cost of apartheid to black, poor, gender- and sexually non-conforming people and women."[253]

This tension, however, is often mitigated by some "white" Afrikaner youth through choice. As Blaser highlights, it is important to take into account the role that choice plays in a democratic, capitalistic society:

> "Liberal and conservative Afrikaners are coming to terms with adapting to an Africanizing society and this also means that one chooses how much to be an ethnic Afrikaner. ...In order to break with the ideology of Afrikanerdom of the past, some started to re-think their adherence to Afrikaner ethnicity and turned to choosing their identity. This also means that one is equally belonging to an Afrikaans community and to a broader, Anglophone world community. In fact, the complexity and variety of Afrikaner identity is such that throughout their upbringing, they belonged and continue to belong to an Afrikaner and an English ethnicity."[254]

This serves to showcase the complexities of belonging, the sense of which is widely accepted as a fundamental human need[255]. This basic need, amongst

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[253] Van der Westhuizen, "Sitting Pretty," 193.
[254] Blaser, "Afrikaner Identity After Nationalism," 18.
[255] Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary, "The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation," *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 3, (1995): 497-529. https://hec.unil.ch/docs/files/56/618/b_and_m_need_to_belong_pb.pdf.

other motivating factors, serves a driving force for some young Afrikaners to renegotiate their identity within in local and global (anglicised) whiteness. This is achieved through emigration or "semigration", which has been argued to be a strategy of whiteness in South Africa in seeking white normative "comfort zones"[256]. These strategies, however, are not at the immediate disposal of, for instance, a white Afrikaans-speaking first year student. Whilst campus will undoubtedly not be the first time that he/she engages with various "others", this may be the first time that he/she is challenged academically and/or personally by, for instance, a similarly aged black, coloured, or Indian student. In these instances lie strong transformative potential. In confronting his/her identity in relation to local whiteness, the student has the potential to confront his/her relation to the "other". Given SU's demography, this often does not occur, with normative whiteness still providing an easily accessible "comfort zone" of sorts. However, as the transformative policies discussed above begin to take hold, allowing a demographic and normative shift to take place, this will become more of a reality for many Afrikaans-speaking students. For now, however, whiteness remains normative on campus. The significant language policy shift has brought the normalcy of Afrikaans into question, which brings an opportunity for white Afrikaans-speaking students to find new avenues of belonging. The pervasive power of whiteness, both demographically and institutionally, remains overtly alluring. The less obvious route here, would be for white Afrikaans-speaking students to find commonalities in their search for belonging, with other, more marginalised students (for whom belongingness remains an ever elusive reality on campus). A shared belief in not only the value of belonging, but also the processes seeking to achieve it, is essential. This emphasis on seeking commonalities comes with risks and cannot be done haphazardly, as this may induce grounds for white victimisation and even cultural theft[257]. This can have severely negative transformative impacts, as indicated by Blaser:

> "To imagine themselves as the victims of the new dispensation, young Afrikaners may usurp the apartheid victim's place and hence forfeit the

[256] See Kevin Durrheim, Xoliswa Mtose and Lyndsay Brown, *Race Trouble: Race, Identity and Inequality in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (South Africa: University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Press, 2011), 128.
[257] Milazzo, "On White Ignorance, White Shame, and Other Pitfalls in Critical Philosophy of Race," 562.

> need to offer redress and atonement. The debate raises the difficult question to what kind of history and to what kind of past can Afrikaners refer to that allows them to imagine themselves as members of the new nation and construct a new, social identity."[258]

Overall, whiteness does not have a great track record of establishing shared or common realities with those outside of – and thus at the behest of – its structures. This often relates to how whiteness engages with the past, so as to create a more comfortable present. This is particularly evident with whiteness in South Africa, by the means in which it negates individual responsibility for collective past injustices. This extends pertinently to the white Afrikaner youth of today, as Jansen notes: "…the South African experience shows, the flight from responsibility is indeed of the more common expressions among children of Apartheid perpetrators: whatever happened in the past happened"[259]. This is not a unique phenomenon, having been well documented as occurring, for instance, in Germany following World War Two whereby many Germans wanted to forget the past. Nonetheless, a rather novel strategy arises for Afrikaner youths of today, allowing them to shirk their collective responsibility for the past – the potential to withdraw into local and global (anglicised) whiteness. Here we see the past impacting contemporary identity choices. This chosen whiteness, though, is not exonerated from what has been labelled within CWS as *white guilt*.

5.5. White Guilt and Shame

White guilt, unlike white resistance, showcases an active struggle with coming to terms with the past according to Flynn[260]. This activity however, should not be conflated with transformative productivity. A debate has occurred in South African whiteness studies, as to whether whiteness should invoke *guilt* or *shame* in order to achieve greater transformative justice. As Marzia Milazzo argues:

[258] Blaser, "Afrikaner Identity After Nationalism," 168.
[259] Jansen, *Knowledge in the Blood*, 56.
[260] Flynn, "White Fatigue."

> "Many scholars do not just posit shame as a valuable emotion, in other words, but prescribe shame to white people. Yet calls for guilt or shame are detrimental to the achievement of racial equality. Not only is there no proven relationship between feelings of either guilt or shame and antiracist action, but demands for affective modification also reproduce misconceptions about racism."[261]

As Milazzo notes, guilt, or shame, often serve to re-centre whiteness, in that it allows for the white subject to discursively distance his-/herself from making material contributions to transformative justice. Guilt often becomes debilitating, rarely leading to action. Milazzo considers *rage* as a more suitable affect for anti-racist action – "not rage addressed at the self or the Other, but directed at racial injustice"[262]. According to Milazzo, "shame has become the preferred emotion recommended to white people" and adds that "ignorance is now the modus operandi for talking about white epistemology"[263]. Here Milazzo makes a further suggestion, in shifting "the conceptual lens from ignorance to *disavowal*". Underlying Milazzo's suggestions, is a desire to maintain a focus on structural dimensions of racism, with whiteness actively *disavowing* this dimension and their relation thereto. By foregrounding whiteness' active interest in reproducing the structural status quo, Milazzo makes a noteworthy contribution to the field of CWS. This active interest has been shown to be most obvious within *white ignorance and white resistant* strategies. Similarly, through *white fragility*, whiteness is able to covertly, yet equally pervasively, maintains the status quo. Indeed, Milazzo's criticism of the discourse on *white ignorance* is again worth reiterating as it brings into question the merit of Flynn's *white fatigue* thesis. Does this thesis "reduce whiteness and white racism to a mere misunderstanding among friends", as Andile Mngxitama writes?[264] Although Flynn's thesis flirts with reductionism, it argues, that instead of Mngxitama's suggestion of a "misunderstanding", there exists a lack of understanding

[261] Milazzo, "On White Ignorance, White Shame, and Other Pitfalls in Critical Philosophy of Race," 562.
[262] Ibid., 563.
[263] Ibid., 568.
[264] Andile Mngxitama, "End to whiteness a black issue", *Mail and Guardian*, 24 October, 2011, https://mg.co.za/article/2011-10-24-end-to-whiteness-a-black-issue (accessed 2 January 2018), cited in ibid.

altogether. Although there may be *white ignorance* at play within Flynn's thesis, it nonetheless establishes a facilitative starting point. Namely, that there exists white students that do not understand the structural dimensions of racism, despite having an – albeit basic – understanding of the perils of (individualised) racism. Indeed, Milazzo notes that this is an area of focus that remains to be cultivated:

> "The location of *white knowledge* – that is, white people's awareness of racial privilege – and the on-going impact of this awareness on the production of knowledge itself remain to be further explored in theories of racial epistemology."[265]

Whilst there are undoubtedly students that employ resistance, fragility and various other defensive strategies, further nuance must be added to the mix. It is undoubtedly true that racial inequality will remain without addressing the deep-seated structural injustices that exist within South Africa. This needs to remain central in our transformative focus. This predominantly occurs at a level outside of the control of young students at SU. Relational transformation, in this sense, offers an inroad for an individual to have a wider reaching impact. As has been shown, however, whiteness is inherently complex, often invoking strategies that make meaningful transformation – institutional, relational or otherwise – impossible to achieve. The question thus remains – does whiteness carry any prospective transformative potential?

5.6. Prospective potential – Revitalising White Fatigue

The importance of shifting students' understanding of the systemic aspects of racism provides an avenue to circumvent negative, reactive and unproductive strategies that whiteness invokes to preserve the racial status quo. In providing a systemic understanding, the individualistic nature of white responses such as *guilt*, *shame*, *resistance*, and *fragility* can be brought into question and dismantled. There should be a realistic understanding that the goal should not be

[265] Milazzo, "On White Ignorance, White Shame, and Other Pitfalls in Critical Philosophy of Race, " 568.

to *resolve* 'racial' conflict absolutely, but rather to seek to *transform* one's engagement thereto. As Marthinus Conradie and Susan Brokensha showcase:

> "…race talk in classrooms should carefully guard against implicitly creating the impression that the goal is to find a way of resolving racism – inasmuch as this becomes a discursive act of closing the topic, and should instead stimulate the kind of race cognisance that is willing to uncover and critique its ongoing permutations. Based on our reading of the prevalence of Born Free framings, this should include an ongoing suspicion of whiteness that is able to continually examine its manifestation, rather than the pursuit of closuree [sic.]."[266]

In establishing this lack of understanding and need for educative intervention, one must remain cognisant of the fact that *ignorance* offers a blissful exoneration of whiteness in this regard. Furthermore, research into the viability of "single identity work" should be considered. This forms an alternative approach to transformation, which establishes intragroup work (in this case white Afrikaner students) as a prerequisite to establishing prejudicial reduction via intergroup contact[267]. White *fatigue* must also be qualified and scrutinised accordingly so as not to re-centre whiteness. This falls in line with Flynn's caution:

> "By no means am I advocating for a "free pass" to exempt White students from continuing the difficult work of excavating how racism functions. Rather, I am presenting a way of recognizing both the intellectual challenges of learning about racism in the face of the popular focus on individual behaviors and the human desire to not be singularly or flatly defined in negative terms."

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[266] Marthinus S. Conradie and Susan I. Brokensha, "Reconfiguring race in the online interactions of South African undergraduates," *Critical Arts*, 30, 4, (2016): 555, https://doi.org/10.1080/02560046.2016.1226731.

[267] As intended by initiatives such as the LLL initiative. See Cheyanne Church, Anna Visser, Laurie Shepherd Johnson, "A path to peace or persistence? The 'single identity' approach to conflict resolution in Northern Ireland," *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 21, (2004): 273–293, http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/crq.63.

White *fatigue*, then, from a facilitative perspective, offers an optimistic and humanised insight into transformative practice. However, given Steyn's findings, it remains contentious in that a lack of understanding can easily be conflated with *ignorance*. In following notions of anti-essentialism, however, this thesis has found that contextualisation remains key in providing nuance to this tension between generalised and apologist reasoning. Historical, economic and political forces remain contemporarily influential. With transformation situated at the nexus of these forces, the question remains whether transformation becomes institutionally *and* relationally viable in a country often polarised on all three aforementioned fronts. SU's LLL initiative provides an example of how transformative policy, though well formulated, can have limited dichotomous reach. How then, does one facilitate engagement within the liberalism-conservatism continuum? Matthew Feinberg and Robb Willer's recent findings suggest a novel approach referred to as "moral reframing"[268].

5.6.1. Moral Reframing

Feinberg and Willer argue that morality needs to be taken into account when viewing politicised environments (such as transformation), stating: "[m]orality contributes to political polarization because moral convictions lead individuals to take absolutist stances and refuse to compromise"[269]. Though the dissection and discussion of the various complex facets of *morality* is outside the ambit of this mini-dissertation, Feinberg and Willer's findings are cited here due to their purported impact on facilitating effective engagement across societal gulfs. Their study, in a nutshell, holds that liberals and conservatives hold opposing stances on morally loaded topics. Grounded in Moral Foundations Theory (MFT), five moral foundations are established: "harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity."[270] MFT further holds:

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[268] Matthew Feinberg and Robb Willer, "From Gulf to Bridge: When Do Moral Arguments Facilitate Political Influence?," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41, 12, (2015): 1–17, https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167215607842.

[269] *Ibid., 15.*

[270] *Ibid., 2.*

> "…that liberals tend to endorse foundations based on caring and protection from harm (*harm*) and maintenance of fairness and reciprocity (*fairness*) more strongly than conservatives. However, conservatives tend to endorse moral concerns related to ingroup-loyalty (*loyalty*), respect for authority (*authority*), and protection of purity and sanctity (*purity*) more than liberals. …As a result of these differing moral commitments, liberals and conservatives tend to view the world through different moral lenses and often have contrasting viewpoints on morally charged issues."[271]

Though essentialist in nature, these findings suggest the effectiveness of "moral reframing". "Moral reframing" occurs, in practice, by reframing political arguments "to appeal to the moral values of those holding the opposing political position"[272]. This, according to the authors, "presents a means for political persuasion that, rather than challenging one's moral values, incorporates them into the argument. As a result, individuals see value in an opposing stance, reducing the attitudinal gap between the two sides"[273]. Applied to transformation, this insistence on reframing is perhaps slightly reductionist. As Paul Lederach's finding on the "moral imagination" suggests:

> "The moral imagination requires the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity; the fundamental belief in and pursuit of the creative act; and the acceptance of the inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too familiar landscape of violence"[274]

Nonetheless, Feinberg and Willer offer an avenue into bridging polarised dualisms so often found throughout South African and indeed global society. As

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[271] *Ibid.*
[272] *Ibid., 1.*
[273] *Ibid., 15*.
[274] John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5.

Lederach notes, this is no easy task, especially in SU's case, where whiteness still remains normatively influential. However, if difference (in terms of political positionality or otherwise) is normalised on these contentious issues, transformative potential arises. From here, an investigation into the moral values held by either ends of the politically polarised spectrum may offer insights into how reframing could occur to generate bridges between what Feinberg and Willer refer to as the "moral empathy gap"[275]. Given how heavily politicised transformation has become at SU, as indicated by the *taaldebat*, this rhetoric shows local promise. Moreover, Feinberg and Willer's findings indicate applicability to SU in that one of their studies related directly to language transformation and policy[276]. In practice, moral reframing requires institutional (and individual) awareness, in that SU would have to consider the ways in which its moral standpoints and values are shared or opposed by its supportive or non-supportive base. This consideration could avoid redundant reception, as Feinberg and Willer's findings suggest:

> "…[A]rguments appealing to the messenger's values rather than the audience's values were not only unpersuasive to the target audience but also did not impact the attitudes of those already in favor of the political position being argued for."[277]

Nevertheless, this consideration is contingent on further localised research. It remains to be seen whether moral reframing can overcome the pervasiveness of whiteness at SU. The establishment of normative diversity thus becomes an overarching prerequisite for effective transformative practice to take place. A multidisciplinary approach towards establishing this (in part ideological) shift, offers unique prospective insights.

[275] Feinberg and Willer, "From Gulf to Bridge," 3.
[276] In "study 2", the authors recruited "conservative participants to write arguments in favor of making English the official language of the United States that would appeal to liberal targets". Ibid.
[277] Ibid., 13.

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter has detailed some of the complex forces at play within transformation at SU. Whiteness, as previously identified in chapter three and four as holding defensive preservationist strategies, has been used as a lens to try and comprehend observable transformative shortcomings. Global and local CWS has offered unique theoretical insights into this multifaceted issue. The normativity of whiteness, often prescribed within global whiteness, has been brought into question in relation to SU, due to local contentious literature. Due to SU's demographic makeup, however, it has been suggested that normative whiteness remains a pervasive force within SU. The lack of normative diversity, as a corollary, remains an overarching threat to institutional efforts to transform. Whiteness, in terms of individual responses provides an interrelated hindrance. The non-exhaustive array of responses invoked by whiteness to transformation were listed in this chapter. This served to showcase not only the complexity of whiteness, but also the difficulty in developing transformative practice that effectively dismantles it. Nevertheless, some prospective potential was highlighted in relation to white fatigue and moral reframing.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1. Concluding remarks

This thesis has showcased some of the complexities and nuances of transformation, by using SU as an example of an institution embattled with various competing forces and interests. Whiteness has been identified as a key protagonist within this arena. Using a variety of defence mechanisms, it has managed to maintain a normative presence at SU. Its greatest weapon remains its demographic dominance. Having said that, however, this is gradually shifting due, in part, to the various transformative policies enacted to try and destabilise this disproportionate reality. Using CRT, some of these policies have been analysed and criticised. A focus was placed on the Language Policy, given its central role in aiming to contribute to greater campus diversity. The lack of historical context contained within the document, in terms of highlighting Afrikaans' stigmatic past, undermines the intent and efficacy of the policy's impact going forward. The framing of Afrikaans in terms of its empowering potential, though valid in terms of its application to certain segments of South African society, lacks intersectional validity, in that it does not consider the disempowering and disenfranchising connotations attached to the language (in its academic application or otherwise). This relates not only to connoting the language in terms of its oppressive history in relation to black South Africans, but also in relation to coloured South Africans, in terms of the language's resistant history in relation to creolisation. Using CRT, this thesis has been able to raise some concerns.

Aside from institutional concerns, this thesis has also raised apprehensions in terms of relational transformation. Whiteness, with a specific focus on Afrikaner whiteness, has been established as a complex campus force that contains defensive elements in relation to transformation. This focus on whiteness was done in terms of a structural and individualistic lens. This was contextualised with reference to various other dynamics, such as intra-/inter-personal identity, which was extended to include "online" identity through a discussion on the polarising potential of social media. Whiteness was then dissected using CWS, revealing various aspects or "strategies" that often serve to reinforce

transformative injustices. These range from blatant *resistance*, to more latent elements such as *fragility*, *guilt* and *shame*. Often, these latent strategies come in discursive forms and are thus particularly unproductive in relation to transformation, as they serve to engender a lack of active and meaningful engagement. This is further compounded by the loaded perceptions ascribed to 'race' and transformation – as evidenced by the self-selecting bias contained in the LLL initiative. Engagement, here, often comes in the form of reaction, rather than response. This is understandable, in the case of SU, as the nascent field of "neuroscience and peacebuilding" explains. This field of enquiry offers caution in relation to idealisms relating to the assumptive rationality often ascribed to human behaviour, particularly in tense transformative spaces. As Mari Fitzduff points out:

> "In situations of conflict and violence, and often preceding such, where our families, communities and our people feel under stress, fear and group processes often overtake our emotions. These emotions can be extremely hard to control, particularly at group level."[278]

Fitzduff's analysis, from a neuroscience perspective, showcases the innate tensions that often surface with transformation. It also brings into question the efficacy of transformative interventions that assume rational reception. Given the complex forces at play within SU, particularly in relation to whiteness, it may be productive to question the rationality of various transformative subjects and actors. In other words, transformation remains complexly stigmatised by whiteness, as evidenced by the various defensive strategies invoked in relation thereto. Ultimately, with transformation, comes inevitable change. With this change, comes a need to shift our understandings of the conflict seeking transformation. Flynn suggests shifting from individualistic understandings of racism (such as prejudice) to systemic interpretations. This, however, may not be sufficient in establishing active transformative engagement given the aforementioned precariousness noted by Fitzduff. She adds:

[278] Mari Fitzduff, "An Introduction to Neuroscience for the Peacebuilder," 2015, https://www.academia.edu/10234805/An_Introduction_to_Neuroscience_for_the_Peacebuilder (accessed 3 February 2018).

> "The upshot of such precariousness between fear, emotion, and reasoning is that for change to happen, we need to be both emotionally and rationally engaged. It is not enough for people to intellectually understand that they should take actions that can end a conflict. Many of us have filing cases full of possible 'rational' approaches to all of the conflicts in which we are working. However, for people to actually approach that filing cabinet, and its possible solutions, they also need to be emotionally motivated to do so, which is often a harder process to manufacture than any reasoning in favor of particular solutions."[279]

As such, a significant challenge remains for SU, in establishing this motive in relation to transformation. Given the high levels of emotion on display at SU, as evidenced by the *taaldebat* and more recently by student protests, it is submitted that there is no shortage of emotive energy available in relation to transformation. The question of transforming this energy may serve as a useful starting point, particularly in relation to its defensive and reactionary formulations. This question can only be answered, however, with adequate awareness of these unproductive forces. Whiteness, as has been showcased in this thesis, should be seen as predisposed to both defensiveness and reactiveness, but not predetermined. As SU's demography becomes more justly proportionate, this predisposition has both positive and negative potential. Positivity, however, is contingent on both institutional and relational responses to these predispositions. Effective engagement with (normative) whiteness offers a complimentary avenue to address this contingency and holistic transformation as a whole, in aiming to facilitate normative diversity on all fronts.

[279] Fitzduff, "An Introduction to Neuroscience for the Peacebuilder," 8.

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